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 an imprint of Cideb Editrice, Genoa, Canterbury

First edition: April 2002

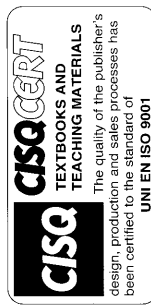
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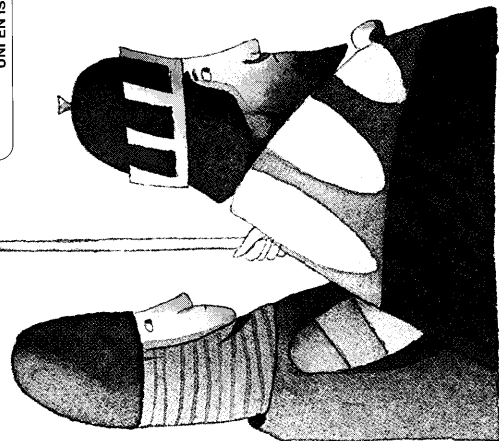
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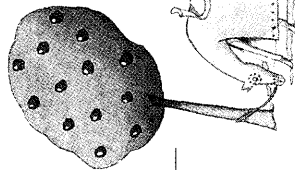
ISBN 88-7754  
 ISBN 88-7754

Printed in Ital



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First Certificate in English Examination-style exercises

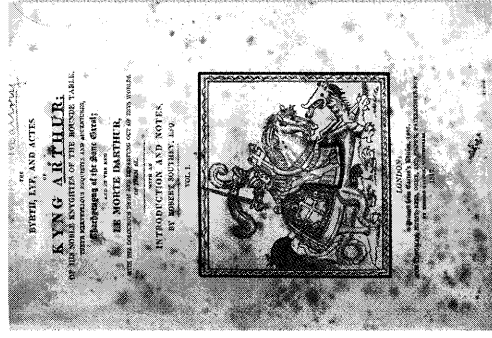
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These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the extracts linked to the listening activities.

# Sir Thomas Malory

Very little is known about the author of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, except that he finished writing the book in the ninth year of Edward IV's reign, that is in 1469 or 1470, and that William Caxton published his edition in 1485. It is now known that Caxton edited the original material substantially, as Malory's original version was discovered in 1934.



Although there has been a great deal of uncertainty about the identity of the author, it has been generally accepted that *Le Morte d'Arthur* was written by Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel in Warwickshire. He was the son of a landed gentleman<sup>1</sup> who had an important position in local society. He was a Member of Parliament and a magistrate. It is known that Thomas Malory spent his early years as a respectable landowner and that he had become a knight by 1441. He was elected a Member of Parliament in 1445.

There was a sudden change in Sir Thomas Malory's life in 1450. This respectable country gentleman was accused of a series of astonishing crimes including violent attacks, rape<sup>2</sup> and theft. In March 1451 an

1. **landed gentleman** : someone possessing a large amount of land.
2. **rape** : sexual attacks.

order was given to arrest Malory. He was accused of participating in stealing cattle and sheep. When he was finally arrested, Malory escaped from prison by swimming a castle moat.<sup>1</sup> He then took part in other attacks on property, notably at Combe Abbey, where he and his men stole a large sum of money. He was arrested again in 1452 and spent most of the next eight years in prison in London awaiting trial for his crimes. He was released from prison on bail<sup>2</sup> several times and committed further violent crimes. Eventually he was captured and returned to prison in London. He died there in 1471 and was buried near Newgate.

**1 Say whether the following sentences are true (T) or false (F), and then correct the false ones.**

- |  | T                        | F                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. We know very little about the life of Sir Thomas Malory.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. William Caxton did not publish <i>Le Morte d'Arthur</i> exactly as Malory had written it.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revel was a knight and a Member of Parliament.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Sir Thomas Malory arrested a man for many violent crimes in 1451.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. At Combe Abbey, Sir Thomas Malory attacked some men who had stolen a large amount of money. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Sir Thomas Malory died in 1471.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

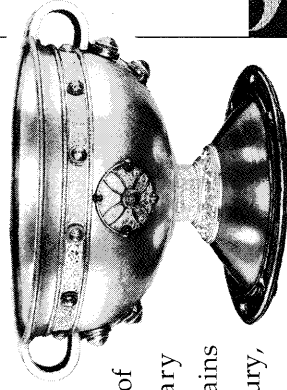
1. **moat** : area around the castle filled with water to protect it from invasion.
2. **bail** : someone paid money and guaranteed his return to court for the trial.

# William Caxton's Preface to *Le Morte d'Arthur*

**W**illiam Caxton began his preface by saying that he had been asked to print a history of the Saint Greal<sup>1</sup> and of King Arthur by 'many noble and divers<sup>2</sup> gentlemen of this realm of England'. He said that these people had reminded him that King Arthur ought to be remembered by Englishmen above all other Christian kings.

Caxton said that there had been nine heroes who corresponded to the literature that critics describe as 'The Matter of Rome', 'The Matter of France' and 'The Matter of Britain' (see page 44). They were: 'three paynims'<sup>3</sup> (Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar), 'three Jews' (Joshua, David and Judas Machabeus), and 'three Christian men' (King Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon).

Caxton then addressed<sup>4</sup> the question of the historical existence of King Arthur. He said that he had discussed this with some of those who wanted him to produce a history of Arthur. He was told that there was clear proof, both in the form of archaeological remains and documentary references. Caxton listed the principal remains associated with Arthur: his tomb at Glastonbury,



1. **Saint Greal** : the Holy Grail, the vessel that Christ used when performing the first Holy Communion with his disciples.
2. **divers** : different.
3. **paynims** : pagans, those who are not Christians.
4. **addressed** : talked about.

his seal <sup>1</sup> at Westminster, Gawain's skull <sup>2</sup> at Dover and the Round Table at Winchester. After mentioning these, he argued that there could be no doubt that King Arthur really existed. Still, it seems likely that Caxton did not take all this 'evidence' too seriously, because he commented that 'to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in, but for to give faith and belief that all is true that is contained herein, <sup>3</sup> ye be at your liberty.' <sup>4</sup>

Caxton told his readers that they would find 'noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, <sup>5</sup> love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin' in the book.

### 1 Answer the following questions.

- a. Why did William Caxton print *Le Morte d'Arthur*?
- b. Into what three categories were the heroes that Caxton mentioned divided?
- c. Who were these nine great heroes?
- d. How did Caxton prove the actual existence of Arthur?
- e. What did Caxton say the real purpose of *Le Morte d'Arthur* was?
- f. What are some of the human virtues you can find in the book?
- g. What are some of the human defects you can find in the book?

1. seal : insignia.
2. skull : part of the head which encloses the brain.
3. herein : inside, here.
4. ye be at your liberty : you are free to choose.
5. hardiness : endurance, courage.

## Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*

William Caxton's edition of *Le Morte d'Arthur* divided Sir Thomas Malory's material into twenty-one books. The discovery of a manuscript version of Malory's stories in 1934 made it clear that Caxton edited the material quite substantially. The manuscript showed that Sir Thomas Malory's work was divided into eight groups of tales, most of which formed independent works, although Malory said that the sixth and seventh tales belonged together. Malory's original structure for the tales is shown in the chart which follows.



La Mort D'Arthur by James Archer, 1860.

Soon, however, Uther Pendragon fell ill and no one knew the cause of his (8).....  
 One of the king's knights, Sir Ulfius, was determined to find out what was wrong with the king.  
 'What is the matter, Sir?' he enquired. 'Why have you (9)..... sick?'  
 Uther Pendragon sighed deeply.  
 'I'm sick for anger and love of Igraine,' the king replied. 'I'll never be well again.'  
 Sir Ulfius decided to seek out Merlin, the king's (10)..... He thought that Merlin might be able to help the king.  
 'I know everything already,' Merlin told him. 'I can help him if he agrees to do (11)..... for me in return. Tell him that I will come to see him soon.'  
 Sir Ulfius hurried back to the king's tent with Merlin's message.  
 'I've seen Merlin,' he reported (12)..... 'He says he can help you but in return, you must agree to do something for him.'  
 'Where is he?' Uther Pendragon asked quickly. Just then, he looked up and saw that the magician was standing at the entrance to the tent.  
 'Come in, come in!' he cried excitedly.

ILL

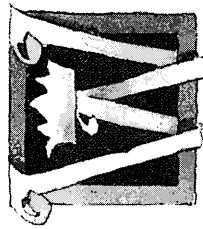
FALL

MAGIC

THING

EXCITE

# CHAPTER ♦ ONE



hen Uther Pendragon was King of England, he fought a long war against the Duke of Cornwall. However, Uther Pendragon finally decided to make peace with the duke. The duke and his wife, Igraine, came to the king's palace to discuss the plan for peace.

Uther Pendragon made his guests very welcome and it seemed that there would soon be peace between the king and the duke. Unfortunately, the king fell in love with the duke's wife. He told her that he was in love with her and asked her to betray <sup>1</sup> her husband. Igraine was very angry with Uther Pendragon because she was in love with her husband.

'The king wants to dishonour me,' <sup>2</sup> she told the duke. 'I think we should return to our own castle where we will be safe from him.'

The duke followed his wife's advice and they left Uther Pendragon's palace secretly. When the king learned that his guests had left so secretly, he was furious. He called his advisers together and asked them what he should do.

'Send a message to the Duke of Cornwall and order him to come back,' one of the advisers suggested. 'If he refuses, you

1. **betray** : be unfaithful to.
2. **dishonour me** : make me do something wrong.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

must take an army and attack him.'

Uther Pendragon did as his advisers suggested and sent a message to the duke ordering him to return at once. The duke refused to obey him. The king's army laid siege <sup>1</sup> to the Duke of Cornwall's castle. Soon, however, Uther Pendragon fell ill and no one knew the cause of his illness.

One of the king's knights, Sir Ulfius, was determined to find out what was wrong with the king.

'What is the matter, Sir?' he enquired. 'Why have you fallen sick?'

Uther Pendragon sighed <sup>2</sup> deeply.

'I'm sick for anger and love of Igraine,' the king replied. 'I'll never be well again.'

Sir Ulfius decided to seek out <sup>3</sup> Merlin, the king's magician. He thought that Merlin might be able to help the king.

'I know everything already,' Merlin told him. 'I can help him if he agrees to do something for me in return. Tell him that I will come to see him soon.'

Sir Ulfius hurried back to the king's tent with Merlin's message.

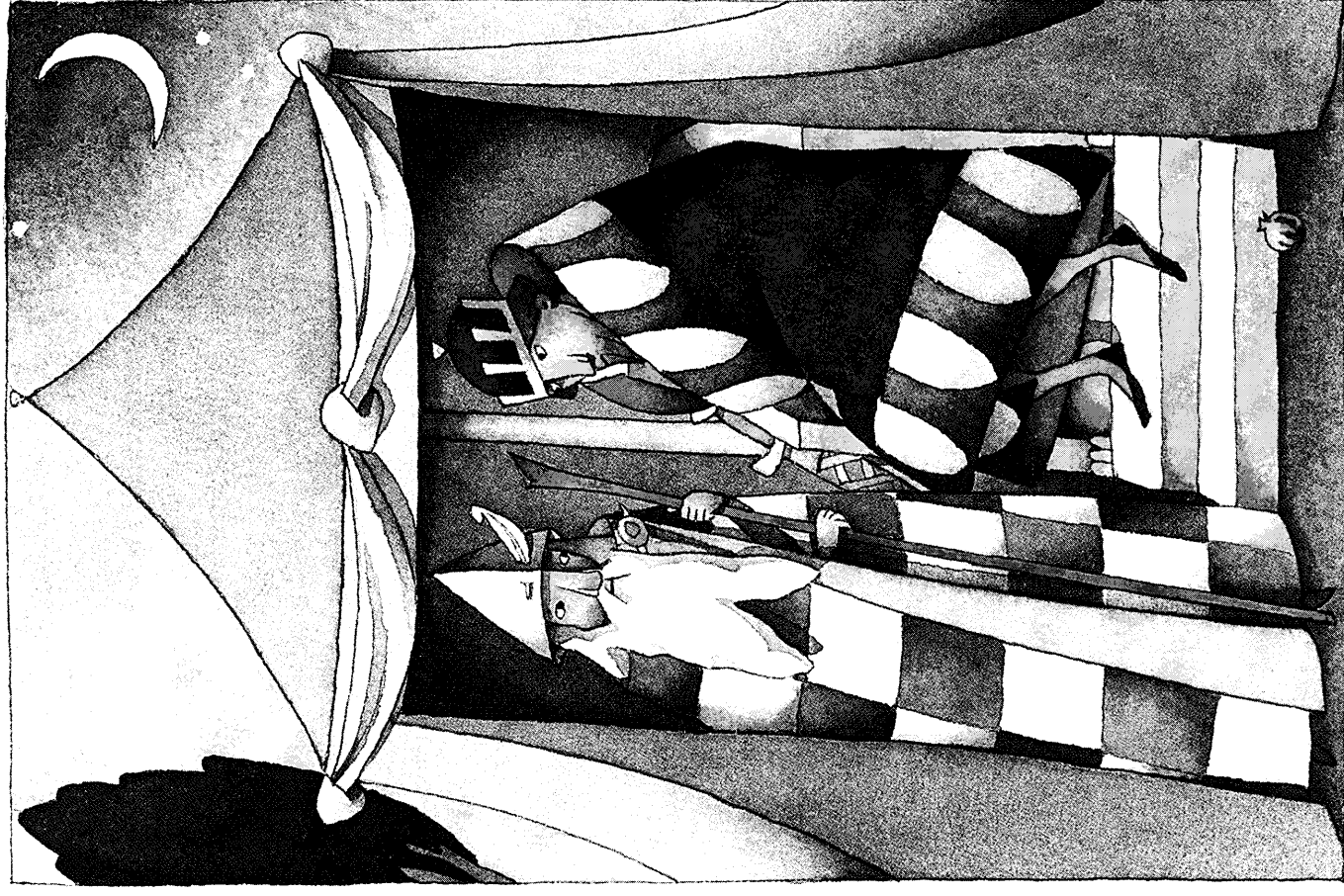
'I've seen Merlin,' he reported excitedly. 'He says he can help you but in return, you must agree to do something for him.'

'Where is he?' Uther Pendragon asked quickly. Just then, he looked up and saw that the magician was standing at the entrance to the tent.

'Come in, come in!' he cried excitedly.

END

1. **laid siege** : surrounded the castle with knights.
2. **sighed** : breathed out.
3. **seek out** : look for.



Merlin entered the tent and stood before the king.

'I know everything,' he told the king quietly. 'I know that you're in love with Igraine. If you promise to do something for me, I'll help you.'

'I promise,' Uther Pendragon replied eagerly. <sup>1</sup> 'I'll do whatever you want, Merlin, if you can make Igraine love me!'

'Listen carefully,' Merlin instructed him. 'I'll use my magic to make you look like Igraine's husband. You can go into the castle tonight and Igraine will think you are the duke. You must tell her that you are tired and she will take you straight into the bedchamber. <sup>2</sup> You will lie beside her tonight and she will treat you as if you were her husband.'

'Can you really do that?' Uther Pendragon cried.

Merlin smiled at the king's astonishment <sup>3</sup> and then he spoke seriously.

'Igraine will have a child by you,' he said quietly. 'When the child is born, you must give it to me and I will be responsible for looking after it. That's the promise you have to make me.'

'Very well,' Uther Pendragon agreed. 'I'll make sure that Igraine's child is given to you when it is born.'

When evening fell, <sup>4</sup> Uther Pendragon, Merlin and Sir Ulfius came out of the king's tent. The duke was looking down from the castle walls when the three figures emerged. The duke recognised Uther Pendragon and he decided to come out from the castle to attack the king's army. He came out through a

1. **eagerly** : quickly, with enthusiasm.

2. **bedchamber** : bedroom.

3. **astonishment** : great surprise.

4. **evening fell** : it became dark.

little gate in the castle wall and began to fight the enemy soldiers. He was killed before Uther Pendragon entered the castle.

Everything went as Merlin had planned. Igraine thought that Uther Pendragon was her husband. She took him into the bedchamber and they spent the night together. Merlin came to their bedside very early in the morning and woke the king.

'You must go,' he whispered urgently. 'You must leave the castle before anyone else wakes up.'

Uther Pendragon dressed quickly and left the castle with the magician.

Later that day Igraine heard the news that her husband had been killed the evening before. She realised that the man who had come to her bed in the night was not the duke.

'But who was he?' she wondered. 'And why did he look like my husband?'

Igraine said nothing to anyone about the mysterious man who had come to the castle. She mourned <sup>1</sup> her husband with great sadness because she had loved him deeply. She soon became aware that she was carrying the mysterious man's child. Still she said nothing to anyone.

A few months later Uther Pendragon's advisers suggested that the king should make peace with Igraine.

'The duke is dead,' they reminded him. 'There is no cause for war between you and Igraine.'

Uther Pendragon agreed to make peace. He told Sir Ulfius that he was still in love with Igraine and that he wanted to

1. **mourned** : was very sad because of his death.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

marry her.

'I'll speak to her, Sir,' Sir Ulfius said.

Sir Ulfius went and told Igraine of the king's proposal. She agreed to meet the king and shortly afterwards they announced that they would be married.

The marriage between Uther Pendragon and Igraine was a happy one. He told her that the mysterious man who had come to her bed on the night of the duke's death was really himself.

'So the child I am carrying is really ours!' Igraine cried with delight.<sup>1</sup>



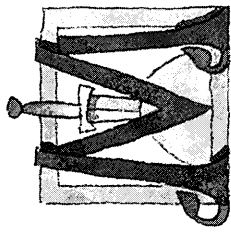
1. *delight* : happiness.

Go back to the text

**FCE 1** Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D for the following questions.

- 1 Why did Uther Pendragon invite the Duke of Cornwall to his castle?
  - A ☐ He wanted to talk about ending their long war.
  - B ☐ He wanted to kill the duke and his wife.
  - C ☐ He wanted to seduce the duke's wife.
  - D ☐ He wanted to make peace with Igraine.
- 2 Why did Uther Pendragon ask Igraine to betray her husband?
  - A ☐ Because he wanted to win the long war.
  - B ☐ Because he was in love with her.
  - C ☐ Because Igraine was in love with him.
  - D ☐ Because they loved each other very much.
- 3 Why did Igraine tell the duke that they should go back to their castle?
  - A ☐ Because she didn't like the food in Uther Pendragon's castle.
  - B ☐ Because she didn't want Uther Pendragon to kill her husband.
  - C ☐ Because she wanted her husband to win the war.
  - D ☐ Because she did not want to betray her husband.
- 4 Uther Pendragon's advisers suggested that he should attack the duke if
  - A ☐ Igraine did not leave her husband and marry him.
  - B ☐ the duke and his wife did not return to his castle.
  - C ☐ the army was able to win the war.
  - D ☐ Igraine was in love with him.

## CHAPTER TWO



erlin went to see Uther Pendragon shortly before the child was born, to remind the king of the promise he had made. 'You must give the child to Sir Ector,' Merlin told him.

The king did as he had promised and Igraine's child was given to Sir Ector.

There was now a war in England between Uther Pendragon and his enemies. Many knights on both sides were killed and the kingdom was unhappy. Merlin supported the king and helped him in his battles and eventually the kingdom was united again.

However, Uther Pendragon fell ill and died. The knights began to fight among themselves over who should be the next king.

Merlin had a plan to restore order. He went to see the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>1</sup>

'You must order the knights to come to London at Christmas,' he told the archbishop. 'Tell them that there will be a miracle in London that will show them who is to be the next king.'

The archbishop followed Merlin's advice and all the knights made their way<sup>2</sup> to London just before Christmas.

1. **Archbishop of Canterbury** : the senior archbishop of England.
2. **made their way** : went.

## CHAPTER TWO

They all went into the great church of the city for the Christmas service and they prayed for the peace of the kingdom. When the service was over, the knights came out of the church. As they walked through the churchyard they saw a strange sight. There was a huge block<sup>1</sup> of stone standing in the middle of the churchyard. A large sword was stuck into the top of the stone.

The knights stepped forward to look. One of them read some words that were carved<sup>2</sup> into the stone in letters of gold.

'Whoever pulls this sword out of the stone shall be the next King of England.'

Several knights tried to pull the sword out of the stone. The great crowd in the churchyard grew increasingly excited as each knight tried his best,<sup>3</sup> but no one was successful.

The archbishop watched the knights' efforts<sup>4</sup> and then he addressed the crowd.

'The knight who can pull the sword out of the stone is not here,' he said. 'We must be patient. He will surely come.'

The knights agreed that they would wait for the right man to come. In the meantime, they said that they would organise a great jousting match<sup>5</sup> for New Year's Day.

Sir Ector heard about the New Year's Day joust and decided to take his son, Sir Kay, and the young Arthur to London. They rode up together and stayed overnight in the city. When they set out in the morning for the joust, Sir Kay forgot to take his sword with him.

1. **huge block** : enormous mass.
2. **carved** : cut, engraved.
3. **tried his best** : did what he could.
4. **efforts** : attempts.
5. **jousting match** : a dangerous competition between knights who tried to push each other off their horses with their spears. Many knights were seriously injured or killed during the competitions.

'Go back to the house,' he ordered Arthur, 'and bring my sword to me.'

Arthur turned back the way they had come and knocked on the door of their lodgings. <sup>1</sup> There was no one in the house. Arthur did not know what to do, but then he remembered that he had seen a sword in the churchyard he had ridden past.

'I'll get that sword for Sir Kay,' he said to himself. END

Arthur rode quickly to the churchyard and seized hold of <sup>2</sup> the sword. He pulled and the sword came away from the stone. Arthur carried it to the joust and gave it to Sir Kay.

'I couldn't enter the house,' he explained, 'but I found this sword for you.'

Sir Kay looked closely at the fine sword that Arthur had given him. He had heard about the sword in the stone and he realised that this was it. He did not say anything to Arthur, but rode to his father as quickly as he could.

'This is the sword from the churchyard, Father!' he cried. 'I will be the next King of England.'

'Where did you get this sword?' Sir Ector asked.

'Arthur brought it to me,' Sir Kay replied.

Sir Ector called Arthur and asked him where he had found the sword.

'It was in the churchyard,' Arthur told him. 'It was sticking out of a great stone. I pulled at it and it came out of the stone.'

Sir Ector looked at Arthur for a moment. Then he knelt <sup>3</sup> in front of the boy. Sir Kay knelt as well.

1. **lodgings** : temporary accommodation.

2. **seized hold of** : took in his hands, reached for.

3. **knelt** : went down on one knee as a sign of respect.

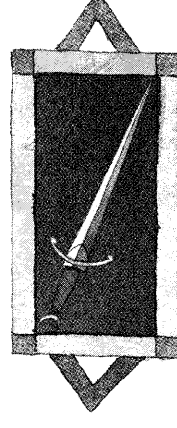
'What are you doing, Father?' Arthur cried. 'Why are you kneeling to me?'

'You will be the next King of England, my lord,' Sir Ector replied. Then he told Arthur and Sir Kay about Merlin. 'You are not really my son,' he explained to Arthur. 'You were brought to me by Merlin when you were born.'

Sir Ector, Sir Kay and Arthur returned to the churchyard together. Sir Ector told Arthur to put the sword back into the stone.

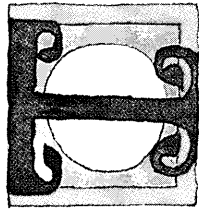
Soon there was a crowd of knights in the churchyard. Each of them tried to pull the sword from the stone and each of them failed. The only person who managed to pull it was the young Arthur.

'He is the rightful <sup>1</sup> king!' the people cried.



1. **rightful** : legitimate.

## CHAPTER ❖ THREE



he first years of Arthur's reign were very difficult ones. There were many kings who did not want England to be a united country. They fought bitterly<sup>1</sup> against Arthur. Slowly, however, Arthur's power increased. People began to see that he was a good king.

There were always many visitors to Arthur's court because people were keen<sup>2</sup> to meet the young king. One day he received a visit from a queen, Morgan le Fay. She was a beautiful woman and Arthur fell in love with her. She, too, fell in love with him. Arthur was sad when Morgan le Fay's visit came to an end.

One day he was sitting by himself when Merlin approached. Merlin was disguised as a small boy.

'Why are you sad?' the boy asked.

'I have reasons for being sad,' the king replied.

'I know your reasons,' the boy said sharply.<sup>3</sup> 'I know all your thoughts. I also know that you are the son of Igraine and Uther Pendragon.'

Arthur looked at the boy in surprise.

'You're wrong,' he told him. 'What makes you think that?'

1. **bitterly** : angrily, with hatred.

2. **keen** : enthusiastic.

3. **sharply** : quickly, angrily.

## CHAPTER ❖ THREE

'I told you,' the boy replied. 'I know more about you than anyone else.'

'I don't believe you,' Arthur said angrily.

Merlin walked away from Arthur and came back a little while later disguised as an old man.

'Why are you sad?' the old man asked the king.

'I have many reasons for being sad,' Arthur replied, 'and a boy has just been here telling me very strange things.'

'The boy told you the truth,' the old man said. Arthur looked at the old man in surprise.

'Yes, I know what the boy said,' the old man told him, 'and it's all true. You're the son of Uther Pendragon and Igraine and God is displeased<sup>1</sup> with you, Arthur,' he went on.

Arthur was now very angry with the old man.

'Who are you? What are you trying to tell me?' he cried in rage.<sup>2</sup>

'I am Merlin,' the old man said quietly.

Suddenly he resumed his own shape so that Arthur recognised him.

'It's really you!'

'You fell in love with Morgan le Fay,' Merlin told him. 'She is Igraine's daughter. You have given your own sister a child! That child, who will be called Mordred, will destroy you and all your knights.'

Arthur found it hard to believe what Merlin had told him. He sent for Sir Ulfius to find out the truth about his birth. Sir Ulfius confirmed what Merlin had said. Arthur still did not believe the

1. **displeased** : angry.

2. **rage** : great anger.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

story and sent for Igraine, who came to the palace with her daughter, Morgan le Fay.

'I do not know the truth,' Igraine explained. 'I know I had a son and that Merlin took him away as soon as he was born. But I don't know what happened to him or where he is now.'

'Your son is here,' said Merlin to Igraine, pointing at Arthur. 'This is your son.'

The news that Arthur was Uther Pendragon's son spread<sup>1</sup> throughout England. The knights now accepted Arthur as the legitimate king and there was peace in England.

Arthur lost his sword one day and Merlin promised him a new one. The magician took the young king to a lake and asked him what he could see. Arthur looked and he saw an arm holding a sword coming out of the lake.

'This will be your new sword,' Merlin said. He told Arthur that the name of the sword was Excalibur, which means very sharp.

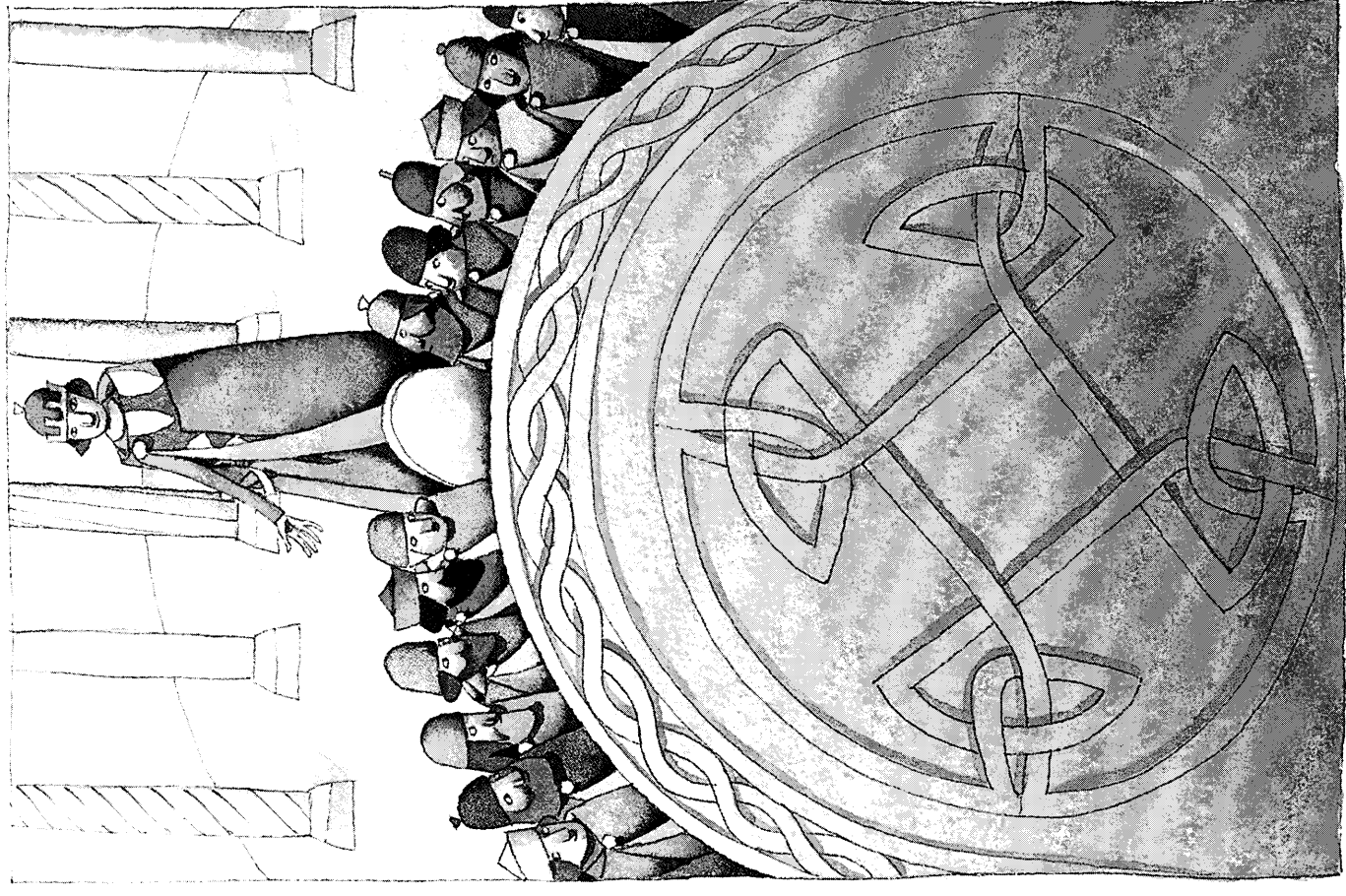
One day Arthur told Merlin that his knights wanted him to marry.

'It's a good idea,' Merlin said cautiously. 'Have you thought of who you might marry?'

'Yes,' replied the king. 'I want to marry Guinevere, King Leodegrance's daughter. You remember him, don't you Merlin? You told me how Uther Pendragon gave him the Round Table.'

'Yes,' said Merlin, 'I know who he is and I remember when your father gave him the Round Table. But if you marry Guinevere —'

Merlin fell silent.



1. spread : became known.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

'What is it?' Arthur asked eagerly. 'What will happen if I marry Guinevere?'

Merlin replied reluctantly, 'She will betray you.'

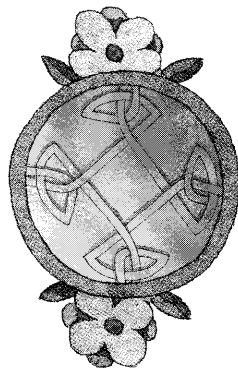
Neither man spoke for a moment. Then Arthur made up his mind.<sup>1</sup>

'I'll marry her all the same,'<sup>2</sup> he announced. 'I love her.'

King Leodegrance was delighted when he learned that Arthur wanted to marry Guinevere. He began to think what he could give the couple as a wedding present. 'I'll give Arthur the Round Table that Uther Pendragon gave me!' he decided. 'It holds one hundred and fifty knights when it is full. I'll send him a hundred knights as well.'

King Leodegrance sent the Round Table and a hundred knights to Arthur's court. Arthur was very pleased at the magnificent gift and he had a sudden idea.

'Go and find me another fifty knights,' he instructed Merlin. 'I want the best knights in the kingdom for the Round Table.'



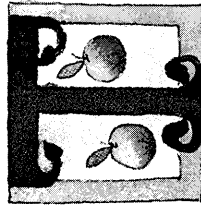
1. made up his mind : decided.
2. all the same : despite that.

Go back to the text

**FOCE 1** Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D for the following questions.

- 1 Many kings fought against Arthur because
  - A ☐ they didn't think he was the rightful king.
  - B ☐ they didn't want England to be united.
  - C ☐ they thought he was too young.
  - D ☐ they didn't think he had really pulled the sword out of the stone.
- 2 Arthur was really Uther Pendragon and Igraine's son but
  - A ☐ he didn't want to admit it.
  - B ☐ he didn't know it until Merlin told him.
  - C ☐ they did not like him.
  - D ☐ he did not like them.
- 3 Arthur fell in love with Morgan le Fay and later discovered that
  - A ☐ she was a queen.
  - B ☐ she loved him too.
  - C ☐ she knew Merlin.
  - D ☐ she was his sister.
- 4 According to Merlin, what will Morgan le Fay and Arthur's son do?
  - A ☐ He will destroy his enemies.
  - B ☐ He will help Arthur find valiant knights for the Round Table.
  - C ☐ He will destroy Arthur and the knights of the Round Table.
  - D ☐ He will become King of France.
- 5 What is Excalibur?
  - A ☐ Arthur's sword.
  - B ☐ Arthur's horse.
  - C ☐ Arthur's kingdom.
  - D ☐ Arthur's castle.

## CHAPTER ❖ FOUR



he fame of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table spread and many brave knights wanted to be part of the fellowship.<sup>1</sup>

There were many jousts and tournaments held at the king's court of Camelot.

The best knight in Camelot was Sir Lancelot. He could defeat all the other knights in battle and he was generous and courteous to everyone at the court. Queen Guinevere knew that Sir Lancelot was the best knight of the Round Table and she delighted in watching him at the jousts and tournaments. Sir Lancelot and the queen fell in love and did everything they could to keep their love a secret.

One day Sir Lancelot and his nephew, Sir Lionel, rode out from Camelot in search of adventure. It was a hot day and Sir Lancelot soon became tired. He dismounted from his horse and lay under a tree to sleep.

Sir Lionel remained awake and soon he

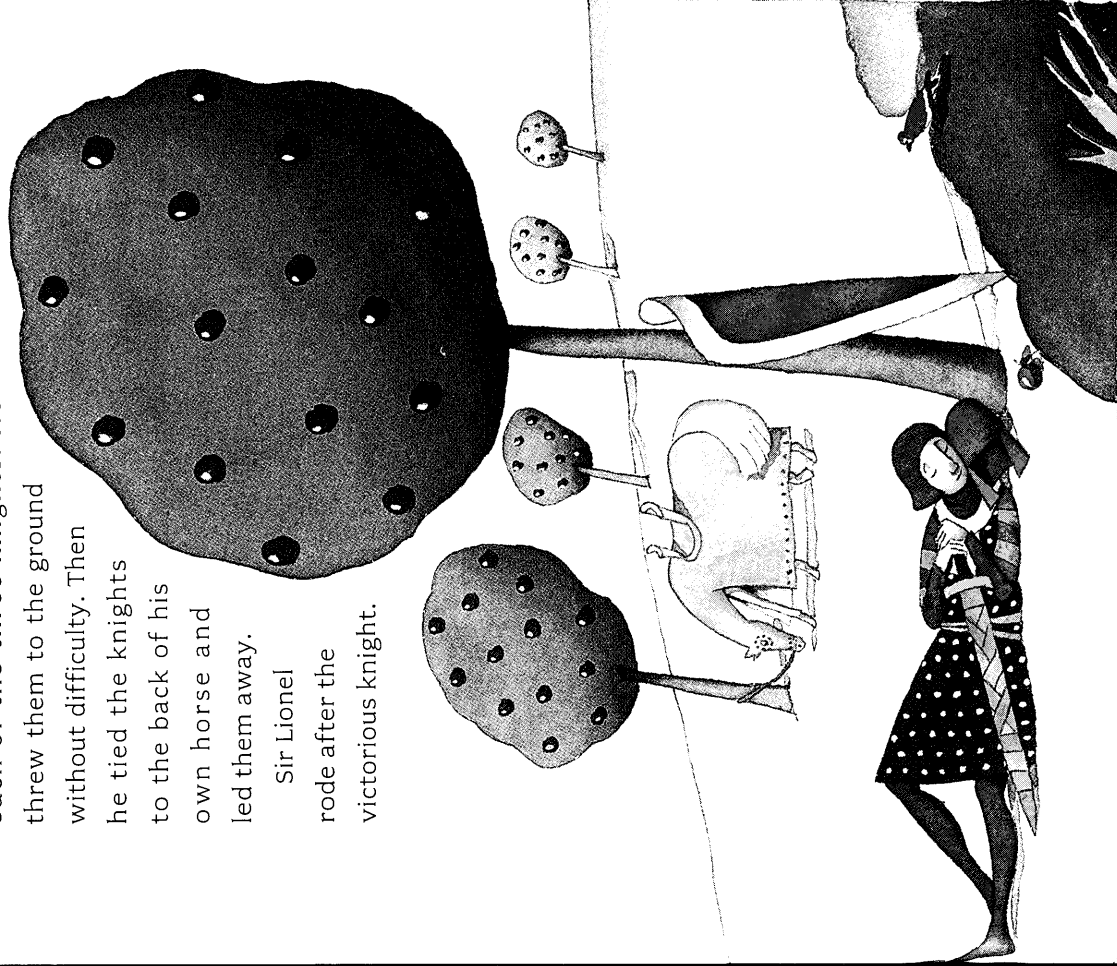


1. fellowship : group.

## CHAPTER ❖ FOUR

saw three knights riding towards him. They were being followed by a single knight. Sir Lionel watched as this knight attacked each of the three knights. He threw them to the ground without difficulty. Then he tied the knights to the back of his own horse and led them away.

Sir Lionel rode after the victorious knight.



He called out to him and the knight turned towards him. The mysterious knight immediately knocked Sir Lionel off his horse and tied him up, just as he had done with the other three knights. Then he led Sir Lionel and the other three knights away.

Sir Lancelot's brother was called Sir Ector de Maris. When Sir Ector realised that Sir Lancelot had left Camelot in search of adventure, he decided to follow him. He rode the same way through the forest that Sir Lancelot and Sir Lionel had gone. Then he found himself outside a castle. Nearby he could see a tree from which many shields were hanging. Sir Ector recognised many of them. They belonged to knights of the Round Table. Suddenly he saw Sir Lionel's shield and he understood that Sir Lionel was a prisoner in the castle.

Just then the knight of the castle, who was called Sir Turquine, appeared. He challenged Sir Ector to a joust and the two knights fought against each other. Sir Turquine was the victor and he brought Sir Ector into the castle as his prisoner. He put him into the castle dungeon,<sup>1</sup> where he had also put the other knights. Sir Ector was very unhappy when he saw that Sir Lionel was a prisoner.

'Where is Sir Lancelot?' he asked.

'I left him sleeping under a tree when I set off for this adventure,' Sir Lionel told him.

Meanwhile Sir Lancelot was still asleep under the tree when four queens came riding by. One of the queens was Morgan le Fay, King Arthur's sister. When the four queens saw the sleeping

knight, they began to quarrel<sup>1</sup> among themselves over <sup>2</sup> who should take the knight as her lover.

'Let's not argue,' Morgan le Fay said. 'I'll put a spell<sup>3</sup> on him that will make him sleep for a while longer. We'll carry him to my castle. Then when he wakes up, we'll make him choose which of us shall be his love.'

When Sir Lancelot woke up he found himself in a castle. He looked up in surprise and saw the four queens.

'We know that you are the best knight in the world,' one of the queens told him. 'We know that you are Sir Lancelot and that you're in love with Queen Guinevere. You will never see the queen again, because you must now choose which of us you will love. If you do not choose one of us, you'll die here in this castle.'

'I would rather die here than live with dishonour,' replied Sir Lancelot.

'You refuse us, then?' asked another of the queens.

Sir Lancelot nodded his head. The queens glared<sup>4</sup> angrily at him and walked out of the room.

That evening a young girl came into the room where Sir Lancelot was a prisoner. She brought him food and drink.

'My father is King Bagdemagus,' she told him. 'He is organising a tournament against the King of Northgalis. If you promise to be on his side in the tournament, I will set you free.'

'I know King Bagdemagus,' Sir Lancelot replied. 'He is a noble king and I'll help him if I can.'

The girl went to see Sir Lancelot very early the next morning.

1. **quarrel** : argue.  
2. **over** : about.

3. **put a spell** : do some magic.  
4. **glared** : looked intensely.

1. **dungeon** : underground prison.

She led him out of the prison and showed him where she had hidden his horse and armour. Sir Lancelot thanked her and hurriedly put his armour on.

King Bagdemagus was very pleased when Sir Lancelot told him what his daughter had done and how he had promised to fight on the king's side at the tournament.

King Northgalis and his knights arrived on the day of the tournament. They had beaten <sup>1</sup> King Bagdemagus in the previous tournament and they were confident of another victory.

The opposing knights charged <sup>2</sup> each other making a great noise. Sir Lancelot knocked down King Northgalis and another sixteen knights. No one could stand against <sup>3</sup> him that day and the victory was soon given to King Bagdemagus.

Sir Lancelot then set off to look for Sir Lionel. He rode through the forest, where by chance he came upon a girl. She stopped him and told him that nearby there lived a knight that no one had ever defeated in a joust.

'His name is Sir Turquine,' she told him. 'That's him!' She pointed out a figure some way away from Sir Lancelot.

In the distance Sir Lancelot saw a knight, who was driving a horse in front of him. Sir Lancelot could see that there was a wounded <sup>4</sup> knight lying on the horse's back. He recognised the wounded knight as Sir Gaheris, one of the knights of the Round Table.

Sir Lancelot rode up to Sir Turquine and challenged him. Sir Turquine accepted the challenge eagerly. He had never been

1. **beaten** : defeated.
2. **charged** : moved quickly to attack.
3. **stand against** : resist.
4. **wounded** : injured.

defeated in battle before and he expected another victory.

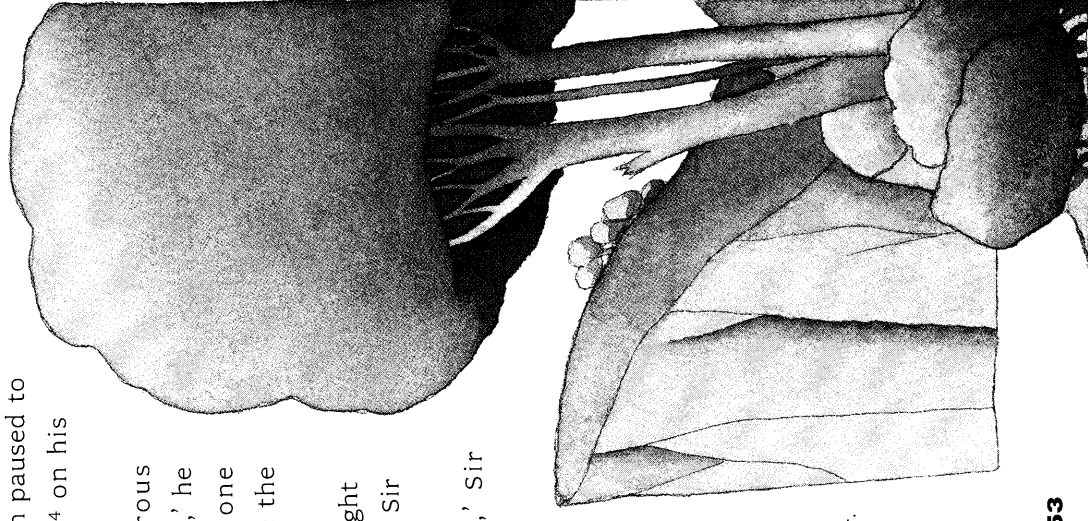
The two knights rode towards each other as fast as they could and pointed their spears. They collided <sup>1</sup> and both their horses fell to the ground. Both knights then stood up as quickly as they could and drew <sup>2</sup> their swords. They fought for a long time and both of them received dreadful <sup>3</sup> wounds from the other's sword. Sir Turquine then paused to gather his breath and leaned <sup>4</sup> on his sword.

'You're the most dangerous knight I have ever encountered,' he said. 'You remind me of the one knight in the world that I hate the most.'

'What is the name of this knight that you hate so much?' asked Sir Lancelot.

'He's called Sir Lancelot,' Sir Turquine replied. 'He killed my brother and I have sworn <sup>5</sup> never to make peace with him. It is because I hate Sir Lancelot that I have taken so many

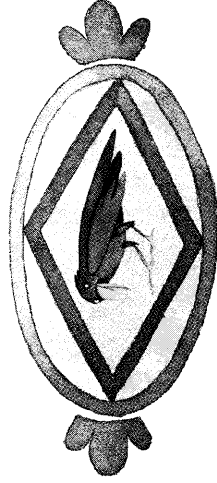
1. **collided** : crashed into each other.
2. **drew** : took out.
3. **dreadful** : terrible.
4. **leaned** : rested.
5. **sworn** : promised.



knights of the Round Table as prisoners.'

'Then we can never be friends,' Sir Lancelot replied, 'because I am the knight you hate most in the world. I am Sir Lancelot!'

The two knights resumed their battle once more. They fought for another two hours, until finally Sir Turquine made a mistake. He was very tired and he lowered his shield. Sir Lancelot rushed towards him with his sword and killed him. Sir Lancelot then went into the castle and freed all of Sir Turquine's prisoners.



## Go back to the text

1 Say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), and then correct the false ones.

- |   | T                        | F                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Sir Lancelot and Lady Guinevere told everybody about their love.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. While Sir Lionel and Sir Lancelot were out looking for adventure, Sir Lancelot decided to stop and sleep under a tree. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Sir Ector defeated Sir Turquine and took him to his dungeon as a prisoner.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Sir Lancelot said he preferred to die rather than love one of the four queens.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Sir Lancelot fought for King Bagdemagus because he considered him a noble man.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. When Sir Turquine first encountered Sir Lancelot he did not know who he was.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Sir Turquine hated Sir Lancelot because Sir Lancelot had killed his brother.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Their combat ended when Sir Lancelot wounded Sir Turquine and took him prisoner.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

'The two knights rode towards each other as fast as they could.'

Look at the difference between the use of 'each other' and the reflexive pronouns: **myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.**

*Igraine and Uther Pendragon looked at each other. ⇒ Igraine looked at Uther Pendragon and Uther Pendragon looked at Igraine.*

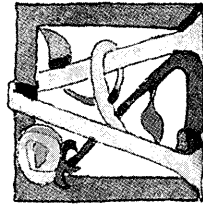
Here the subject and the object of the verb are different.

*Igraine and Uther Pendragon looked at themselves in the mirror. ⇒*

*Igraine looked at her reflection in the mirror and Uther Pendragon looked at his reflection in the mirror.*

Here the subject and the object of the verb are the same.

## CHAPTER ❖ FIVE



nd so the years passed. Sir Lancelot and the queen continued their love affair. Many knights suspected what was happening. Very few of them, however, discussed the scandal openly.<sup>1</sup> They were afraid of Sir Lancelot and they did not want to wound<sup>2</sup> Arthur.

One evening Sir Gawain and his brothers were talking together in a corner of the great hall. Sir Agravaine suddenly began to talk loudly about the affair.

'I'm ashamed of us all,' he said. 'We all know what is happening between Sir Lancelot and the queen. It's a disgrace to the Round Table!'

'You're right,' agreed Sir Mordred eagerly. 'We should do something about it for the king's honour.'

'What do you care about the king's honour?' Sir Gawain asked Sir Mordred angrily. 'You just want to cause trouble!'

'I'm going to speak to the king,' Sir Agravaine announced. 'I'm going to tell him everything.'

Sir Gawain looked at his brothers sadly. He loved the Round Table and he was very loyal to Arthur.

'If you speak to the king,' he warned Sir Agravaine, 'you'll destroy the whole Round Table.'

1. **openly** : in public.

2. **wound** : (here) hurt emotionally.

## CHAPTER ❖ FIVE

'I agree,' said Sir Gaheris. 'You mustn't do it.'

Sir Gareth looked angrily at his brothers, Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred. He rose to his feet and walked away. Sir Gaheris and Sir Gawain also rose and followed him.

Arthur had heard the angry voices and the noisy argument. He walked over to Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred.

'What was all that shouting about?' he asked.

'We were discussing Sir Lancelot and the queen,' replied Sir Agravaine.

King Arthur sighed deeply. He knew what was coming.<sup>1</sup> He had been told years before by Merlin that Queen Guinevere would betray him. He loved Guinevere and Sir Lancelot was his favourite knight of the Round Table.

'People have talked about Sir Lancelot and the queen before,' he said warningly. 'But you know how good a knight Sir Lancelot is. He would kill anyone who made such an accusation.'

'I have a plan,' Sir Agravaine said. 'You are going hunting tomorrow morning,' he reminded Arthur. 'I want you to stay out all day and then send a message to the queen that you will sleep away from the castle. Sir Lancelot is certain to go to the queen's room tomorrow night if he thinks you are not in the castle. I'll be waiting for him with Sir Mordred and twelve other knights. We'll catch them together!'

'Very well,' agreed King Arthur. 'I'll stay away from the castle tomorrow night, as you suggest.'

The next morning the king went hunting. He sent a message to Guinevere in the afternoon, telling her that he would not return to the castle that night.

1. **what was coming** : what was going to happen.

As evening fell, Sir Lancelot told Sir Bors that the queen had sent for him.

'Don't go!' Sir Bors said quickly.

Sir Lancelot looked at his friend in surprise.

'What do you mean?' he asked coldly. <sup>1</sup> 'I told you the queen has sent for me. Do you expect me to disobey her?'

'Be careful,' Sir Bors warned. 'Sir Agravaine has been watching you recently. Please be careful!'

Sir Lancelot walked to the queen's room. He took a sword with him, but he was not wearing any armour. He knocked on the door and entered silently. After a few minutes footsteps could be heard in the corridor outside the queen's room. Sir Agravaine banged <sup>2</sup> heavily on the door.

'Come out, traitor knight!' he cried loudly. 'Come out from the queen's room, Sir Lancelot.'

Guinevere looked desperately at Sir Lancelot.

'What shall we do?' she cried.

'If they catch you in here they'll kill you. And they'll burn me at the stake!' <sup>3</sup>

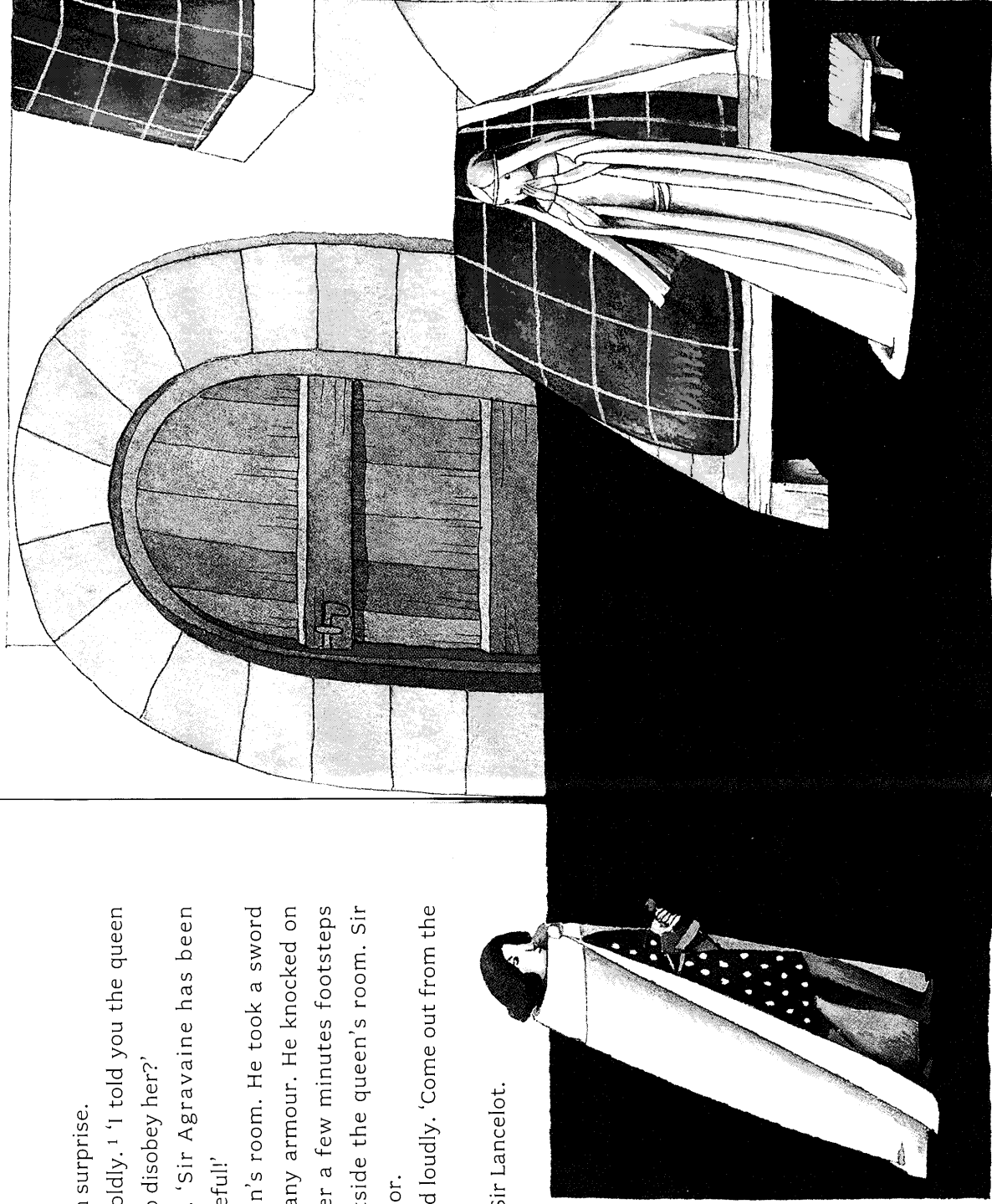
Sir Lancelot picked up his sword.

'Listen to me,' he said to the queen. 'They may kill me, but my friends here at the court will save you from the stake. You won't

1. **coldly** : in an unfriendly way.

2. **banged** : knocked.

3. **stake** : wooden post over a bonfire.



# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

burn because of me. Sir Bors will protect you, my lady.'

The banging on the door continued.

'Come out, Sir Lancelot!' cried Sir Agravaine.

'Come out, traitor knight,' shouted Sir Mordred.

Sir Lancelot opened the door of the room just wide enough for one knight to enter. A figure in full armour rushed in and attacked Sir Lancelot. Sir Lancelot struck the knight a great blow on the head with his sword and the man fell to the ground dead.

Then Sir Lancelot closed the door. He stood over the knight's body and began to remove his armour.

'Help me,' he whispered to the queen. She came to his side and helped him to put on the heavy armour.

Sir Lancelot strode <sup>1</sup> to the door and flung it <sup>2</sup> wide open. Sir Agravaine, Sir Mordred and the remaining eleven knights attacked him fiercely. Sir Lancelot struck them down one by one, until only Sir Mordred was left alive. He was wounded and he suddenly fled. <sup>3</sup>

Sir Lancelot went back into the queen's room.

'This is the end of everything for us,' he told her sadly. 'The king will be my enemy from now on. I've killed thirteen knights of the Round Table.'

'You must go while you can,' Guinevere told him. 'It's not safe for you here.'

'You're in danger, too,' Sir Lancelot said. 'Why don't we escape together?'

'No,' the queen replied. 'I shall stay here at the court. If they try to burn me at the stake, I'm sure you'll come to save me.'

END

1. **strode** : walked quickly.

2. **flung it** : opened it very quickly.

3. **fled** : ran away.

## Go back to the text

### 1 Answer the following questions.

- Why didn't any of the knights tell Arthur about Sir Lancelot's love affair with Guinevere?
- Why wasn't Arthur surprised when he heard about Sir Lancelot and Guinevere?
- What was Sir Agravaine's plan to trap Sir Lancelot?
- Why did Sir Lancelot decide to go to the queen's room even after Sir Bors told him not to go?
- What will happen to Sir Lancelot if they find him in Guinevere's room?
- What will happen to Guinevere if they find Sir Lancelot in her room?
- Which of the knights survived the fight with Sir Lancelot?
- How many knights of the Round Table did Sir Lancelot kill?

### 'You must go while you can.'

When Guinevere says to Sir Lancelot, 'You must go while you can,' she is expressing her own feelings.

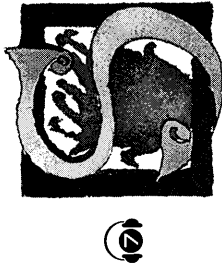
In general, '**must**' is used to express:

- the speaker's personal feelings about what is necessary.  
'I really must help my mother more.'
- the speaker's personal authority: in this case '**must**' is similar to the imperative.  
'You must capture Sir Lancelot,' said Arthur to his knights.

'**Have to**' is also used to express obligation or necessity, but it is generally used:

- to express duties and obligation that come from outside authorities.  
I have to be in the office by 8 o'clock.
- to express simple facts.  
You have to change trains at Milan to go to Austria.

## CHAPTER ❖ SIX



ir Lancelot made his way quickly from the queen's room to Sir Bors.

'Now King Arthur will go to war against me,' he said sadly.

'Against you and all your friends,' Sir Bors added. 'There are many knights who will take your part in the quarrel.'

'It means the end of the Round Table,' Sir Lancelot told him.

Sir Mordred went to tell King Arthur what had happened.

'Thirteen knights!' he shouted angrily. 'Sir Lancelot has killed thirteen knights of the Round Table.'

'Thirteen!' the king cried in astonishment.

Arthur was heartbroken <sup>1</sup> at the thought that he and Sir Lancelot were now enemies. He knew that Sir Lancelot was the best knight in the world. He also knew that many of Sir Lancelot's friends would join him in the war. Then he remembered the queen. He would have to give the order for her to be burnt at the stake. She had been caught with Sir Lancelot and the law was clear about what should happen to her.

Sir Gawain tried to persuade King Arthur not to be too hasty <sup>2</sup> in judging the queen.

1. **heartbroken** : very sad.
2. **hasty** : quick.

## CHAPTER ❖ SIX

'She may be innocent,' he argued. 'Perhaps they've done nothing wrong at all! Besides,' he added, 'if anyone accuses the queen, Sir Lancelot will fight for her.'

'He will not fight for the queen again,' King Arthur said bitterly. 'Sir Lancelot relies too much on his strength and skill as a knight. But I have decided to apply the law in this case. The queen was caught by Sir Mordred and the other knights. She will burn at the stake. And if I capture Sir Lancelot, he too will die a terrible death!'

'Then I hope you never find him!' Sir Gawain said.

'How can you defend him?' King Arthur asked angrily. 'Don't you mind <sup>1</sup> that he killed one of your brothers and wounded another?'

'Sir Agravaine was a good knight,' Sir Gawain admitted. 'But I warned him not to go to the queen's room with Sir Mordred. I told them they were in the wrong.'

The day of Guinevere's execution arrived. King Arthur asked Sir Gawain to escort <sup>2</sup> the queen to the place of execution with his brothers, Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth.

'No, my lord,' Sir Gawain replied. 'I refuse to go to the execution of such a noble queen.'

King Arthur bowed <sup>3</sup> his head. He was secretly proud of Sir Gawain's response to the order.

'At least tell Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth to be there,' he said sternly. <sup>4</sup>

Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth agreed to escort the queen but they refused to wear their armour.

1. **mind** : care.
2. **escort** : accompany.
3. **bowed** : lowered.
4. **sternly** : very severely.

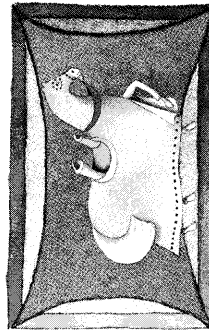
# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

'We will go as men of peace,' they said.

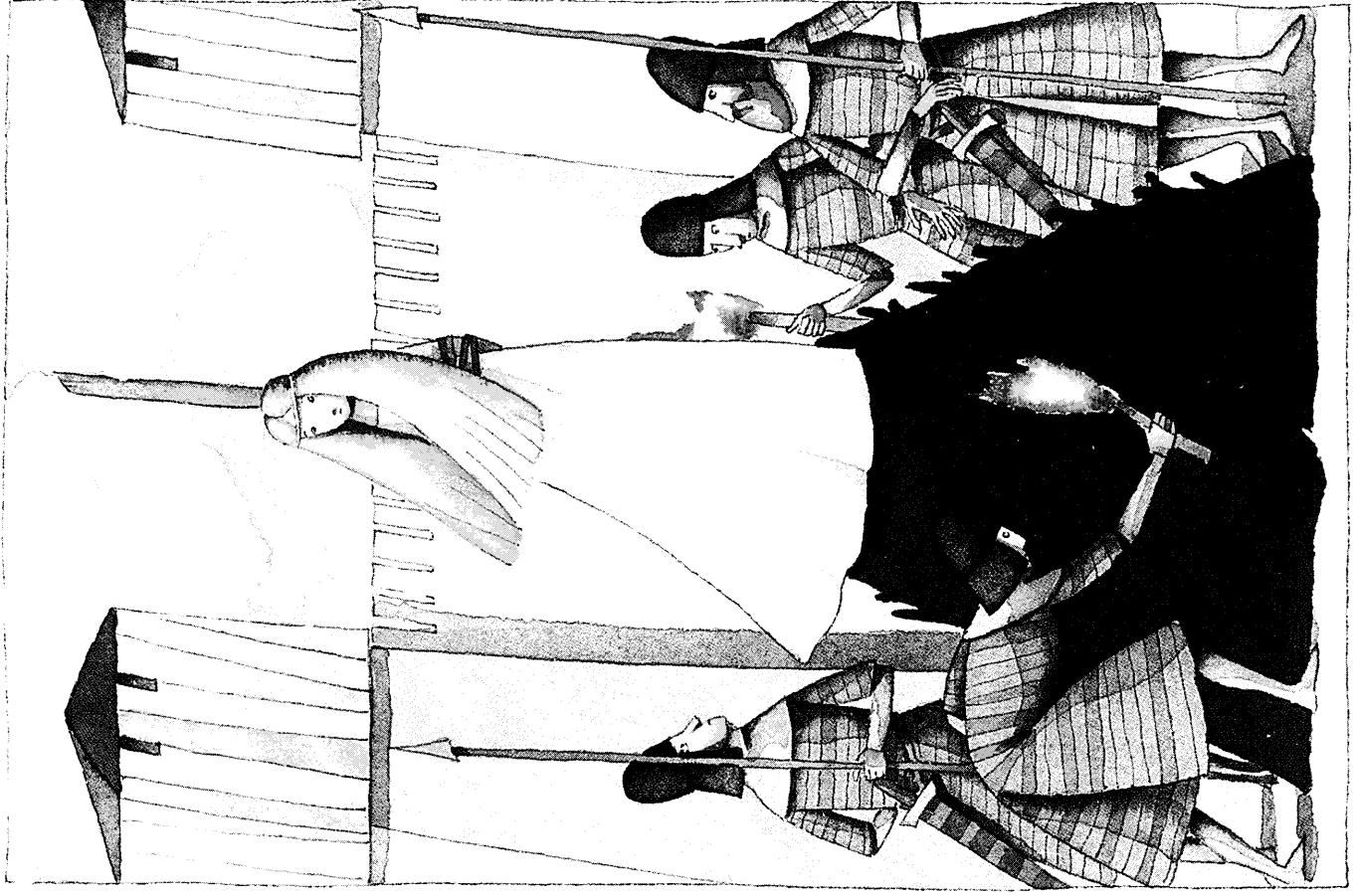
The queen was taken to the place of execution and the fire was prepared. There was a crowd of knights around the queen, some of them armed and some not.

Suddenly there was a great shout and the sound of horses approaching <sup>1</sup> at a gallop. <sup>2</sup> Sir Lancelot rode furiously towards the queen. He took out his sword and attacked the knights who were surrounding her. He fought fiercely and killed many members of the Round Table. He even killed the two unarmed knights, Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth. Sir Lancelot killed them without noticing who they were, or that they were unarmed.

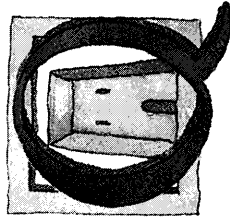
Sir Lancelot came up to the queen and threw a cloak <sup>3</sup> around her shoulders. Then he pulled her onto his horse and rode away.



1. **approaching** : coming closer.
2. **at a gallop** : riding very fast.
3. **cloak** : loose coat that has no sleeves.



## CHAPTER ◆ SEVEN



Queen Guinevere and Sir Lancelot went to his castle, Joyous Gard. Many knights of the Round Table joined them. They admired Sir Lancelot and they felt that he had been right to rescue the queen.

When King Arthur heard that Guinevere had been rescued and that many of his knights had been killed by Sir Lancelot, he did not know what to feel. Part of him was glad that Guinevere had been saved from the fire and he was proud that Sir Lancelot had saved her. However, he was appalled<sup>1</sup> that Lancelot had killed the two unarmed knights, Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth.

**2** 'I don't know why Sir Lancelot killed them,' he told his knights. 'They refused to wear their armour because they wanted to show the world that they had no quarrel against him.'

'Sir Lancelot killed them by mistake,' explained one of the knights who had seen Guinevere's rescue. 'There were many people around the queen when Sir Lancelot came to rescue her. Some of them were armed and others were not. Sir Lancelot just<sup>2</sup> took out his sword and attacked everyone. He didn't mean<sup>3</sup> to kill Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth. He didn't see them in the crowd.'

**3** 'You may be right,' the king agreed, 'but we will now have a

1. **appalled** : very shocked and angry.

2. **just** : simply.

3. **mean** : intend.

## CHAPTER ◆ SEVEN

terrible war. The Round Table will be completely destroyed.'

Meanwhile Sir Gawain had also heard the news that the queen had been rescued.

'Sir Lancelot has done well,' he told the knight who brought the news. 'He was right to rescue the queen from a shameful death at the fire.'

'There is more news, Sir,' the knight told him. 'It is about your two brothers, Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth.'

'What news?' Sir Gawain asked eagerly. 'Why are they not here to tell me themselves?'

'They are dead, Sir,' the knight explained. 'Sir Lancelot killed them both when he rescued the queen.'

**4** 'Impossible!' cried Sir Gawain. 'I can't believe that Sir Lancelot would kill my two brothers. They were friends of his and they were not wearing armour.'

'It is true, all the same,' the knight repeated. 'Sir Lancelot killed them both.'

Sir Gawain went to see King Arthur.

'I promise you,' Sir Gawain told the king, 'that I shall never rest until I have found Sir Lancelot and fought against him. It must be a fight to the death — him or me!'

**5** King Arthur now summoned<sup>1</sup> all the remaining knights of the Round Table and led a great army to Sir Lancelot's castle. They besieged the castle and King Arthur challenged Sir Lancelot and his knights to come out and fight.

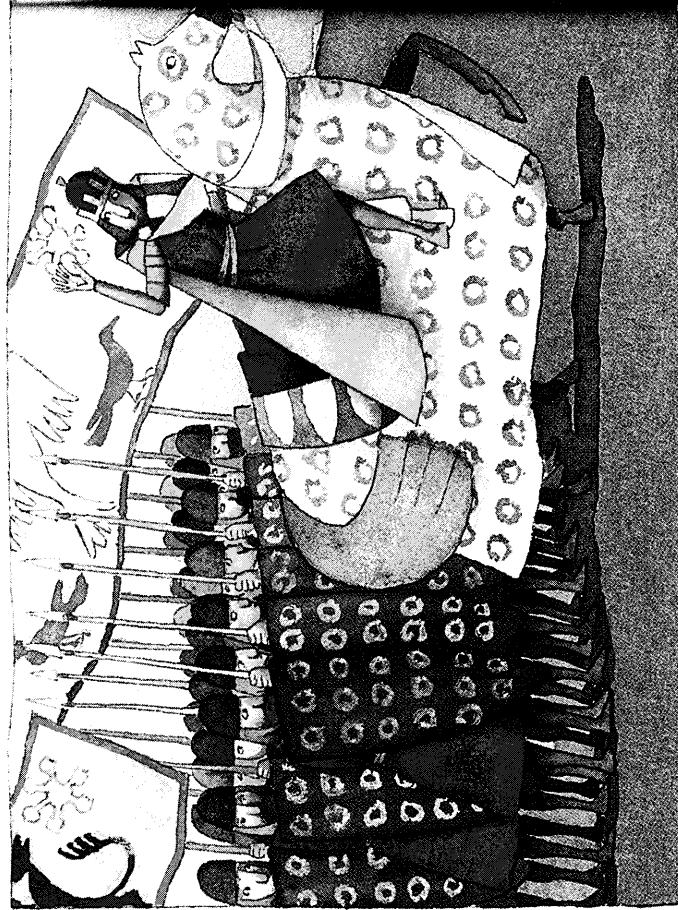
'Sir Lancelot,' shouted the king, 'you are my enemy and either you or I must die. You have taken my queen and you have killed some of the best knights of the Round Table. You're a traitor!'

1. **summoned** : called together.

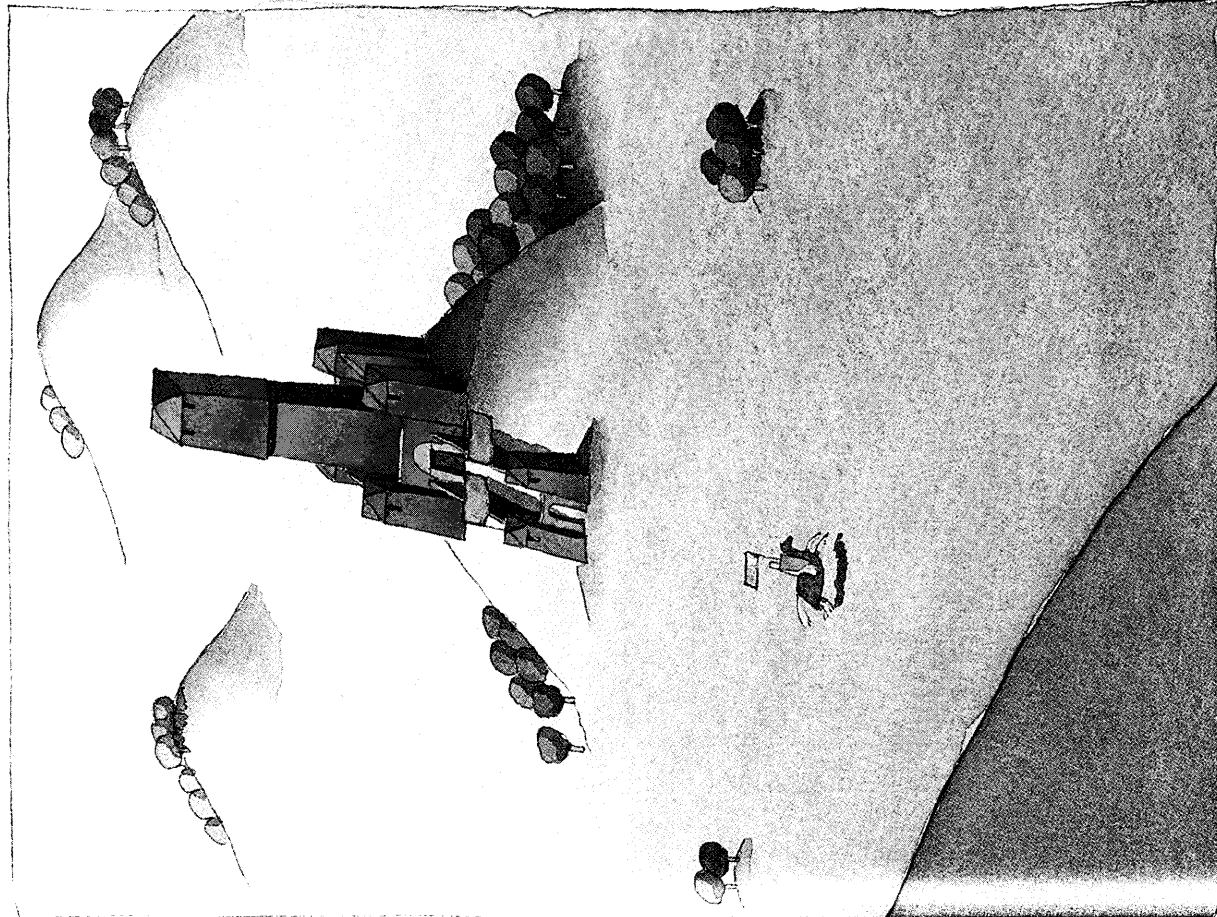
# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

## CHAPTER SEVEN

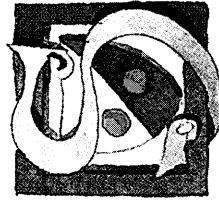
- 6 Sir Lancelot leaned over the castle walls to reply to the king. 'My noble lord and king,' he cried, 'you may say what you like to me, but I shall never fight against you. It is true that I have taken the queen, but I saved her from a shameful death. It is also true that I killed some of the knights of the Round Table, but I did that to save the queen's life.'
- 7 'You betrayed me for years with the queen,' Arthur accused him. 'I gave you friendship and made you the most famous knight in the world, yet you betrayed me. I'll never forgive you!'
- 'The queen is innocent,' Sir Lancelot replied. 'I will fight any knight who accuses her, except for you and Sir Gawain.'
- 'Enough fine <sup>1</sup> words, traitor!' cried Sir Gawain. 'Come out from the castle and fight.'
- END



1. fine : (here) noble-sounding.



## CHAPTER ❖ EIGHT



ir Lancelot did everything he could to avoid a battle with King Arthur, but it was inevitable. Sir Lancelot's own knights within the castle of Joyous Gard told him that he had to fight. 'We cannot stay inside the castle for ever,' they argued. 'Sir Gawain will never let <sup>1</sup> the king make peace with you. Therefore you must go out and fight them.'

Sir Lancelot went to the castle walls again and tried to persuade King Arthur and Sir Gawain not to take part in the battle.

'I beg <sup>2</sup> you both to stay away from the field tomorrow because I do not want to harm <sup>3</sup> either of you,' he told them.

Sir Gawain replied contemptuously <sup>4</sup> to this message.

'The king has led us here to fight you,' he shouted, 'and he will not stay away from the battle. And neither will I!' he went on proudly. 'You killed my brothers, Sir Lancelot, and I will never rest until one of us is dead!'

The battle between Sir Lancelot's knights and the knights of King Arthur was very fierce. Many knights were killed or wounded on both sides.

1. **let** : allow.
2. **beg** : ask.

3. **harm** : injure.
4. **contemptuously** : disrespectfully.

## CHAPTER ❖ EIGHT

King Arthur rode into the battle determined to find Sir Lancelot and fight with him. At last he found him and charged with his spear. Sir Lancelot defended himself against the king's attack, but would not endanger the king's life by attacking him. Everyone saw that Sir Lancelot was trying to save Arthur. Sir Bors saw what was happening and rode to attack the king. He charged and knocked him to the ground. Then Sir Bors drew out his sword and stood over the king.

'Shall I finish this war now?' he called to Sir Lancelot.

'No!' cried Sir Lancelot. 'Don't kill the king!'

Sir Lancelot jumped off his horse and handed the reins <sup>1</sup> to King Arthur.

'Ride away, my lord,' he said to him. 'You could never win if I used all my strength against you — and I'll never do that!'

King Arthur rode away from the battle as Sir Lancelot had advised him. He wept <sup>2</sup> to think of Sir Lancelot's kindness towards him. In his heart he wanted to make peace with both the queen and his friend, but he was ashamed to do so.

The next day there was another battle. This time Sir Gawain attacked Sir Bors. Both knights fell from their horses and began to fight with their swords. Sir Gawain wounded Sir Bors very badly and it seemed that he might kill him. Sir Lancelot saved Sir Bors, but he did not attack Sir Gawain. Sir Lancelot's knights began to be angry with him.

'We came to help you and the queen,' they complained, 'and many of us have been injured for your sake.' <sup>3</sup> But you refuse to

1. **reins** : type of rope used to control a horse when you are riding it.
2. **wept** : cried.
3. **for your sake** : for you.

fight with your real strength. You are letting us die!

The news of the war between King Arthur and Sir Lancelot travelled around the world. When the Pope heard what was happening in England, he decided to stop the killing. He sent an order to King Arthur telling him to make peace with Sir Lancelot and to take Queen Guinevere back to the court.

King Arthur was pleased to receive the Pope's instructions, because now he thought it would be possible to make peace with Sir Lancelot. Sir Gawain, however, advised the king that he should take Guinevere back, but that he should not make peace with Sir Lancelot.

The Bishop of Rochester told Sir Lancelot what the Pope had ordered. Sir Lancelot agreed to return the queen immediately to Arthur's court.

'I never wanted to take the queen away from King Arthur,' he said. 'It was only my intention to save her from a dishonourable death. I am happy for her to return to the court, if she is in no danger.'

'Queen Guinevere will be in no danger,' the bishop told him.

Sir Lancelot and the queen set out for Arthur's court with a hundred knights. When they arrived at the court both of them knelt humbly in front of King Arthur. The king looked at his wife and at his friend and could not speak for the tears that ran down his face.

'My lord,' said Sir Lancelot, 'I have brought you back the queen. And if anyone here, except you or Sir Gawain, says that the queen has ever betrayed you in any way, I am prepared to fight for her honour.'

'The king may make peace with you if he wishes,' Sir Gawain interrupted loudly, 'but I shall always be your enemy, Sir

Lancelot. You killed three of my brothers and I will never rest until I have fought with you to the death.'

'I killed Sir Agravaine because he said I was a traitor knight,' Sir Lancelot told him. 'And I killed Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth when I was rescuing the queen from the fire. I killed them by mistake. But if the king will make peace with me, this is what I shall do to show how much I regret their deaths. I will walk barefoot<sup>1</sup> from Sandwich to Carlisle as a penance.<sup>2</sup> I will stop every ten miles along the road and set up<sup>3</sup> a convent, where prayers will be said morning and evening for the souls of Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth. Surely this will be better than continuing the unhappy war between us!'

King Arthur and his knights wept when they heard of the penance that Sir Lancelot was prepared to do for the deaths of Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth. Sir Gawain, however, was determined to continue the war.

'The king may make peace with you,' he repeated, 'but I shall never agree to it. If the king makes peace with you, I will leave his service.'

Sir Lancelot was very sad when he heard Sir Gawain's words because he realised that the dreadful war between himself and King Arthur would continue. He turned silently and left the court. King Arthur looked at Sir Lancelot as he walked away and his heart nearly broke for sadness at the thought of his friend.

Sir Lancelot returned to Joyous Gard and spoke to the knights who had taken his part in the war.

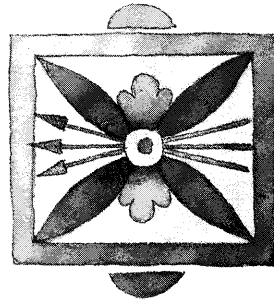
1. **barefoot** : without shoes.
2. **penance** : act of contrition.
3. **set up** : establish.

'I must leave England,' he told them, 'and I shall never see King Arthur or the Round Table again.'

'We took your part in the quarrel with King Arthur,' the knights replied, 'and we cannot go back to him and the Round Table now. We prefer to stay with you.'

'Then we must go to France together,' Sir Lancelot decided.

'I have land there and I will give each of you a portion of it.'



## Go back to the text

1 Say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), and then correct the false ones.

- |   | T                        | F                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Sir Lancelot did not want to fight either Sir Gawain or Arthur.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Sir Lancelot gave his horse to King Arthur.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Sir Lancelot attacked Sir Gawain.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. The Pope ordered King Arthur to make peace with Sir Lancelot.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Sir Lancelot would have fought Sir Gawain if he said that Guinevere had betrayed Arthur.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Sir Lancelot wasn't sorry for killing Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth but he wished to do penance for having killed them. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. The war, however, continued because Sir Lancelot did not wish to make peace with Sir Gawain.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Sadly, Sir Lancelot's knights decided to abandon Sir Lancelot and return to King Arthur's service.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

'You could never win if I used all my strength against you.'

Look at this second conditional sentence:

**Structure:** subject + past simple, subject + would + infinitive  
*If I used all my strength against you, I would defeat you easily.*

Now look at these exceptions with 'were' and 'could':

We can often use 'could' instead of 'would be able to'.  
*If I could speak Spanish, I could work in Mexico.*

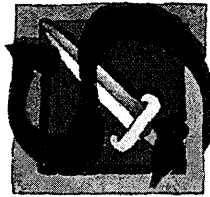
We can use 'were' instead of 'was'.  
*If I were king, I would attack France.*

Before you read

- 1 Listen to the first part of Chapter Nine and say whether the following sentences are true (T) or false (F). Then read the text and correct the false ones.

|   | T                        | F                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Arthur and a great army went to France to pursue Sir Lancelot.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Sir Mordred became the chief ruler of France.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Arthur sent a young girl to Sir Lancelot with a message of peace.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. King Arthur's army besieged the city of Benwick.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. The siege lasted for nearly twelve months.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Sir Lancelot finally decided to fight Sir Gawain because Sir Gawain had called him a coward and a traitor. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Sir Lancelot's strength increased between dawn and midday.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. Sir Lancelot hit Sir Gawain in the leg with his sword.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Sir Lancelot would not kill Sir Gawain because Sir Gawain was a knight of the Round Table.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

# CHAPTER ♦ NINE



ir Lancelot and his knights travelled to France and they settled <sup>1</sup> there on the land that belonged to Sir Lancelot.

Meanwhile King Arthur gathered together a great army to pursue <sup>2</sup> Sir Lancelot. Before he left for France, the king appointed Sir Mordred chief ruler of England.

The news that King Arthur had landed in France quickly reached Sir Lancelot and his friends.

'You see how the king and Sir Gawain are determined to destroy you,' Sir Bors said. 'We must fight them if there is to be peace.'

'King Arthur is the noblest king in the world,' replied Sir Lancelot. 'He is also my friend and I don't want to fight him. We will try to make peace with him.'

Sir Lancelot sent a young girl into King Arthur's camp with a message of peace for the king. She spoke so movingly of Sir Lancelot's desire to be the king's friend that King Arthur could not reply. Most of his knights were also moved by what she said and they would have been willing to go home in peace. Sir Gawain, however, would not let King Arthur make peace.

Sir Lancelot was sad when he heard that the war would go on.

1. settled : lived.

2. pursue : follow.

He took his knights into the city of Benwick and there they waited for King Arthur's army.

The city was soon besieged by King Arthur's army. Every day there was fighting between Arthur's knights and those of Sir Lancelot, but Sir Lancelot himself refused to come out of the city to fight.

'King Arthur is the noblest king in the world and he used to be my friend,' he explained to his men. 'I will never fight against him.'

The siege lasted for nearly half a year and the knights on both sides were exhausted. One day Sir Gawain rode to the city walls and shouted a challenge to Sir Lancelot.

'Why are you hiding like a coward?' he cried. 'Come out and fight, you traitor!'

Sir Lancelot's knights heard Sir Gawain's challenge and they were ashamed.

'You must fight Sir Gawain,' they told him. 'You cannot let him call you a coward and a traitor.'

Sir Lancelot sighed deeply. He knew that he would have to fight now or lose his honour forever. He called for his armour. He then leaned over the city walls and shouted a message to King Arthur.

'You have pursued me into France and besieged this city for six months,' he cried. 'I have been patient because I did not want to fight you. But Sir Gawain has called me a traitor and a coward and I am forced to defend myself against what he says.'

Sir Lancelot rode out of the city towards Sir Gawain. King Arthur's army stood behind Sir Gawain and Sir Lancelot's knights stood behind their leader.

Sir Gawain and Sir Lancelot charged towards each other with a noise like thunder. Their spears clashed together and they fell from their horses to the ground. They jumped up and drew their swords to continue the fight. Soon the ground beneath their feet was covered in blood.

Many years earlier, Sir Gawain had received the gift of strength from a magician. His strength increased three times between dawn and midday and this was the secret of his great reputation as a knight.

Sir Lancelot noticed that his adversary's strength was increasing all the time and there was little he could do against him. Sir Lancelot defended himself against Sir Gawain as best he could, but he began to wonder if the other knight was too strong for him. Sir Gawain advanced all the time and he wounded Sir Lancelot very badly.

The two knights fought all morning and still Sir Gawain seemed to be winning. After midday, however, his strength began to decline. Sir Lancelot redoubled his efforts. He gave Sir Gawain such a blow on the head with his sword that the other knight fell to the ground.

'Kill me!' Sir Gawain cried. 'Now is your chance to finish this war.'

'I won't kill you,' Sir Lancelot replied. 'You are a knight of the Round Table and I won't kill you.'

'If you don't kill me,' Sir Gawain warned, 'I'll return and fight you once more.'

'If you must, you must,' Sir Lancelot said sadly, 'but I won't kill you, Sir Gawain.'

He walked away from the injured knight.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

King Arthur's knights carried Sir Gawain back to his tent and dressed<sup>1</sup> his wounds. He had been badly injured and he stayed in bed for three weeks to recover. As soon as he was well again, however, he rode to the city walls and issued<sup>2</sup> another challenge to Sir Lancelot.

'Come out, you traitor, and fight!' he shouted once more.

Sir Lancelot prepared himself and rode out from the city towards Sir Gawain. The two knights charged towards each other and Sir Gawain's horse fell to the ground.

'My horse has failed me,' cried Sir Gawain defiantly, 'but my sword shall not!'

Sir Lancelot jumped down from his horse and drew his own sword. The two knights began to fight.

Once again, Sir Gawain's strength increased and he wounded Sir Lancelot terribly with his sword. This time, however, Sir Lancelot knew what to expect and he waited patiently for Sir Gawain's strength to diminish.

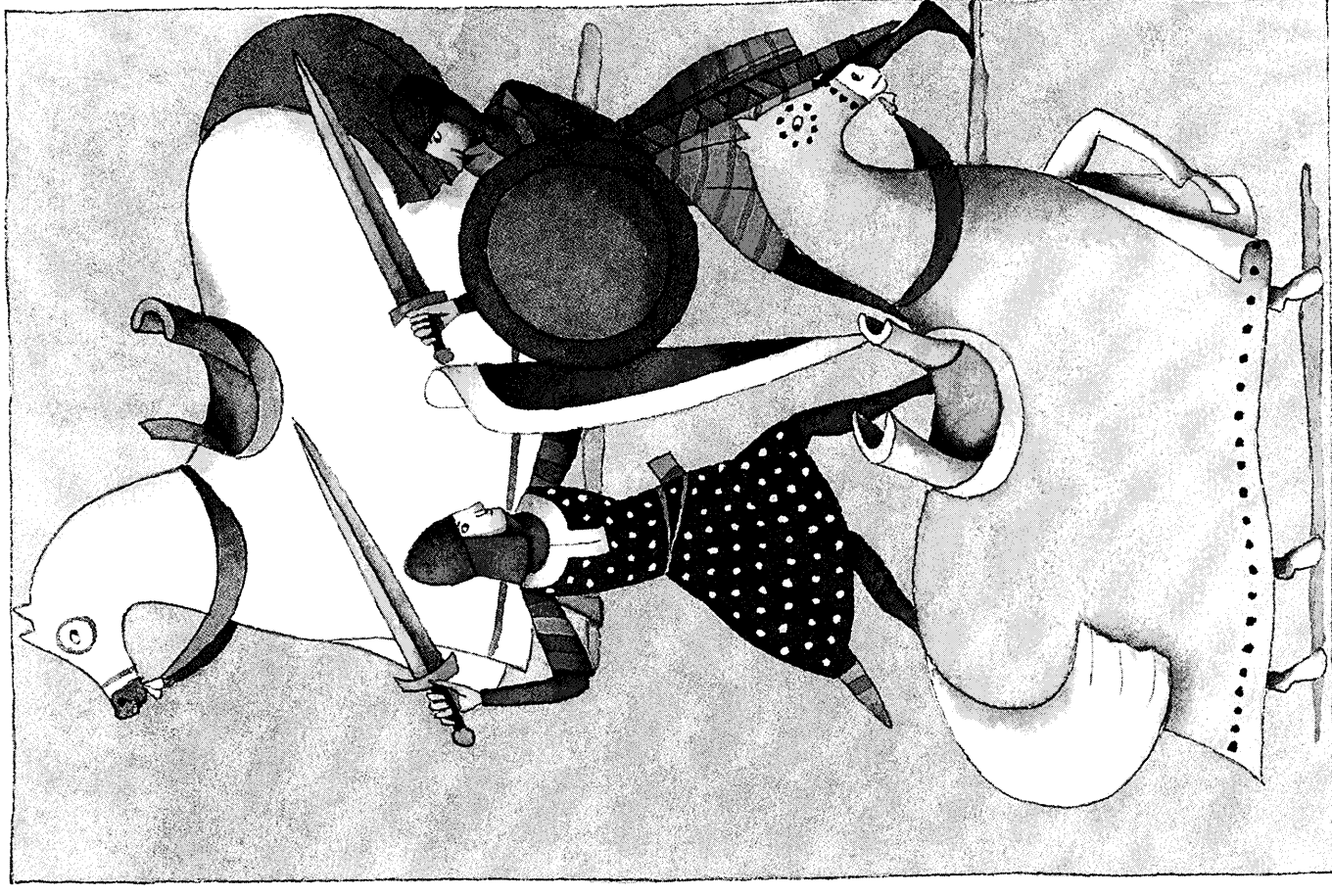
At last, just after midday, Sir Gawain began to weaken. Sir Lancelot now moved forward and struck a great blow with his sword on the old wound that he had made before.

Sir Gawain fell to the ground groaning.

'Kill me,' he cried, 'or this war of ours will last forever. I will come back and fight you again until one of us is dead.'

'If you must, you must,' Sir Lancelot replied sadly. 'But I will never attack you when you're on the ground.'

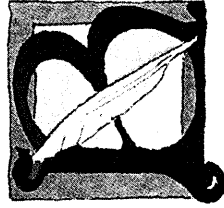
Sir Lancelot returned to the city.



1. dressed : put bandages on.
2. issued : sent.

5. What was the final result of Arthur's first battle with Sir Mordred?
- ☐ Arthur freed Guinevere.
  - ☐ Arthur killed Sir Mordred.
  - ☐ King Arthur and his army had to retreat.
  - ☐ Sir Mordred and his army had to retreat.
6. What did Sir Gawain wish to tell Arthur before he died?
- ☐ That he should have forgiven Sir Lancelot and that the war between them was his fault.
  - ☐ That he was sorry he had not killed Sir Lancelot when they fought.
  - ☐ That he should have forgiven Queen Guinevere.
  - ☐ That Sir Mordred was the best knight in the world.
7. Who appeared to King Arthur in a dream?
- ☐ Sir Gawain.
  - ☐ Sir Mordred.
  - ☐ Sir Lancelot.
  - ☐ Queen Guinevere.
8. What did Sir Gawain advise King Arthur to do?
- ☐ Go back to France to fight Sir Lancelot.
  - ☐ Go to fight Sir Mordred immediately.
  - ☐ Wait for Sir Lancelot to arrive from France before fighting Sir Mordred.
  - ☐ Go to the Tower of London and rescue Guinevere.

## CHAPTER ♦ TEN



ack in England, Sir Mordred had plans of his own to take advantage of King Arthur's long absence from the country. He announced that the king had been killed in France and that he had thus become the new king.

Sir Mordred was also determined to marry Queen Guinevere. She pretended to agree to the marriage, but secretly left the court and went to London. She took over the Tower of London and filled it with knights who were loyal to her. She then told Sir Mordred that she would never marry him. Sir Mordred was furious and began a siege of the Tower of London.

When news of the events in England reached King Arthur, he hurriedly brought his army back from France. He knew that he would have to fight Sir Mordred to free the queen and to regain <sup>1</sup> his kingdom.

Sir Mordred marched his army to Dover, where the king was expected to land. His knights fought a great battle to prevent King Arthur's army from landing and many people were killed on both sides. In the end, however, Sir Mordred was forced to retreat.

Although Sir Gawain fought bravely alongside King Arthur, he

1. regain : take back.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

was badly wounded in the fighting.

'I'm going to die,' he told King Arthur, 'but there is something I want to tell you before I do. All of this trouble is my fault,<sup>1</sup> because I would not forgive Sir Lancelot for the deaths of my brothers. Now I see that I was wrong. I should have advised you to make peace with him, for he has always been loyal to you and to the Round Table.'

Sir Gawain then called for ink and paper and wrote a letter to Sir Lancelot.

'You are the best knight in the world,' he wrote, 'and you have always done what you thought was right. I want the world to know that I have been at fault in the war between us. Now I am dying and I beg you to come home to England and help the king in his struggle<sup>2</sup> against Sir Mordred.'

Sir Gawain handed King Arthur the letter he had written. He then turned on his side and died.

King Arthur sent Sir Gawain's letter to France and then he ordered his army to pursue Sir Mordred's knights.

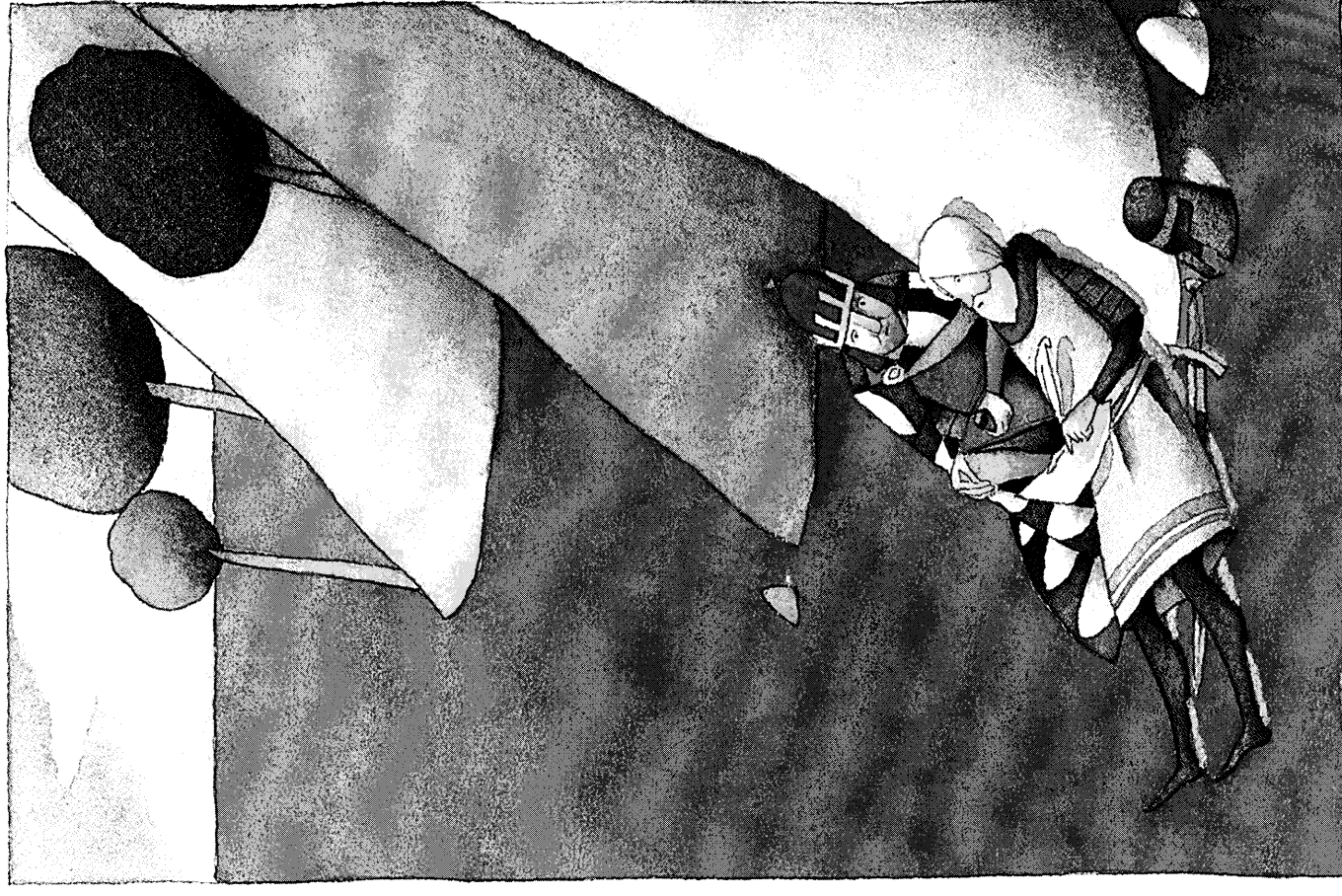
The two armies faced each other and everyone knew there would be a terrible battle between them to decide the fate of England.

King Arthur had a dream in which he saw Sir Gawain standing in front of him. In his dream Sir Gawain warned him not to fight the battle the next day.

'If you fight tomorrow,' Sir Gawain advised, 'you will be killed. You must wait until Sir Lancelot arrives from France to help you.'

END

The next morning King Arthur decided to make a treaty<sup>3</sup> with



1. **fault** : responsibility.

2. **struggle** : conflict.

3. **treaty** : formal agreement.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

Sir Mordred, to avoid fighting a battle that day. He suggested that he and Sir Mordred meet in front of the two armies to discuss the details of the treaty. They would each bring a guard of fourteen knights.

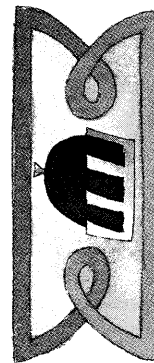
'Watch carefully what happens,' King Arthur told his knights. 'If you see any knight raise his sword, you can be sure that there is treachery<sup>1</sup> among Sir Mordred's knights. If this happens, you must attack his army immediately.'

King Arthur went out with his guard to meet Sir Mordred to discuss the peace treaty. While they were talking, a snake came out of the grass and bit one of the knights on the heel.<sup>2</sup> Without thinking, the knight raised his sword to kill the snake.

Both armies saw the raised sword and each suspected the other of treachery. The commanders gave the word and the two armies moved to the attack.

When King Arthur saw that the two armies were moving towards each other, he rode back quickly to his own army with the fourteen knights who made up his guard.

'It's too late to stop the battle now,' he thought in despair.



1. **treachery** : dishonourable behaviour.
2. **heel** : the back part of the foot.

Go back to the text

## 1 Answer the following questions.

- a. Why did Sir Mordred besiege the Tower of London?
- b. What did Sir Gawain ask Sir Lancelot to do?
- c. What did King Arthur dream just before the battle with Sir Mordred?
- d. What did King Arthur do as a consequence of the dream?
- e. How did King Arthur tell his knights that they could see if there was treachery among Sir Mordred's knights?
- f. Why did one of the knights raise his sword?

'It's too late to stop the battle now.'

After 'enough' and 'too' we can use the infinitive with 'to'.

Look at these examples:

*It's too late to stop the battle now.*

*You are never too old to begin skiing.*

*I don't have enough time to finish my homework.*

*He isn't clever enough to understand.*

*It's too far to walk.*

*She isn't fast enough to win the race.*

## 2 Using either 'enough' or 'too' and the passive form, make one sentence with the same meaning as the two sentences given.

Example: Don't ride that horse. It's not strong enough.

That horse is not strong enough to be ridden.

- a. Nobody could defeat Sir Gawain between midday and dawn. He was too strong.  
Sir Gawain .....

# Before you read

- 1 Fill in the gaps in the text with the words given below. Then listen to the beginning of Chapter Eleven and check your answers.

Mordred destroyed fell moment rest battlefield  
flowing suddenly care treacherous lasted who  
ground over distance wounded seized Gawain

The battle between the two armies <sup>1</sup>..... all day and many  
knights were killed or badly <sup>2</sup>..... King Arthur rode around  
the battlefield all day, looking for the <sup>3</sup>..... Sir Mordred. As  
evening <sup>4</sup>..... the king looked about and saw that there  
were just two knights standing beside him. The <sup>5</sup>..... were  
dead or wounded. <sup>6</sup>..... he saw Sir <sup>7</sup>..... a short  
8..... from him. Sir Mordred was standing alone, because all  
of his army had been <sup>9</sup>.....

'Give me my spear,' the king ordered the knights <sup>10</sup>..... were  
standing beside him. 'I can see Sir Mordred, the traitor,  
<sup>11</sup>..... there and I'm going to kill him.'

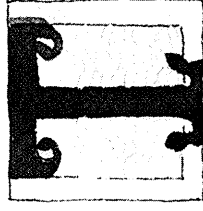
'Remember what Sir <sup>12</sup>..... told you in your dream, Sir,' one  
of the knights reminded him. 'He told you that you would die if you  
fought against Sir Mordred today. Please come away from the  
<sup>13</sup>..... You can fight him another day.'

But King Arthur was too angry to listen.

'I don't <sup>14</sup>..... whether I live or die,' he said, 'so long as that  
traitor who has destroyed all my knights dies today!'

The king <sup>15</sup>..... his spear and ran towards Sir Mordred. He  
raised his sword high in the air and plunged it into Sir Mordred's side.  
Sir Mordred staggered, recovered himself for a <sup>16</sup>..... and  
brought his sword down onto the king's head. Then the traitor fell to  
the ground dead. King Arthur groaned and slid to the <sup>17</sup>.....  
too. His two knights rushed to his side. There was blood  
<sup>18</sup>..... from the wound to his head.

## CHAPTER ♦ ELEVEN



he battle between the two armies lasted all  
day and many knights were killed or badly  
wounded. King Arthur rode around the  
battlefield all day, looking for the treacherous Sir Mordred. As  
evening fell the king looked about and saw that there were just  
two knights standing beside him. The rest were dead or  
wounded. Suddenly he saw Sir Mordred a short distance from  
him. Sir Mordred was standing alone, because all of his army had  
been destroyed.

'Give me my spear,' the king ordered the knights who were  
standing beside him. 'I can see Sir Mordred, the traitor, over  
there and I'm going to kill him.'

'Remember what Sir Gawain told you in your dream, Sir,' one  
of the knights reminded him. 'He told you that you would die if  
you fought against Sir Mordred today. Please come away from  
the battlefield. You can fight him another day.'

But King Arthur was too angry to listen.

'I don't care whether I live or die,' he said, 'so long as that  
traitor who has destroyed all my knights dies today!'

The king seized his spear and ran towards Sir Mordred. He  
raised his sword high in the air and plunged it into Sir Mordred's

1. plunged : pushed.

side. Sir Mordred staggered, <sup>1</sup> recovered himself for a moment and brought his sword down onto the king's head. Then the traitor fell to the ground dead. King Arthur groaned <sup>2</sup> and slid <sup>3</sup> to the ground too. His two knights rushed to his side. There was blood flowing from the wound to his head.

'Help me! Take me away from here,' King Arthur ordered them. 'I can't stand up.'

The two knights lifted the king gently to his feet, but the effort was too great for one of them. His own wounds were very serious and he dropped the king and fell to the ground.

'Now there are just two of us,' King Arthur said sadly to the remaining knight. 'Help me, Sir Bedivere.'

Sir Bedivere carried the king towards the lake and laid him down on the ground.

'Take Excalibur, my sword, and throw it into the water', the king commanded him.

Sir Bedivere took the king's sword and walked to the edge of the lake. He did not want to throw the precious sword into the water where it would be lost forever, so he hid it under a tree and returned to the king.

'What did you see when you threw the sword into the water?' asked the king.

'I saw nothing but the wind and the waves,' replied Sir Bedivere.

'You're not telling me the truth,' King Arthur told him. 'Go and throw the sword into the lake as I told you to.'

- 
1. **staggered** : nearly fell over.
  2. **groaned** : made a noise expressing pain.
  3. **slid** : collapsed.

END

Sir Bedivere went back to the lake and picked up Excalibur. Once again, however, he was reluctant to throw it into the water. He hid it for the second time and then returned to the king.

'What did you see when you threw Excalibur into the water?' King Arthur asked him again.

'I saw nothing but the wind and the waves, my lord,' replied Sir Bedivere again.

Now King Arthur was angry.

'Are you a traitor, too?' he cried weakly. 'Go again and do what I have commanded. You've already delayed too long and I may die as a result.'

Sir Bedivere went to the place where he had hidden Excalibur. He took hold of the sword and threw it as far as he could into the water. He watched as the sword flew through the air and then he saw an arm come out of the water and catch it. Sir Bedivere ran excitedly back to the king.

'What did you see when you threw Excalibur into the water?' King Arthur asked him again.

'I saw an arm come out of the water and catch the sword,' Sir Bedivere told him.

'Carry me to the water's edge,' the king said.

Sir Bedivere lifted the king onto his back and carried him to the edge of the lake. They saw a boat coming towards them across the water. Inside the boat there were several ladies and a queen.

'Now put me into the boat,' commanded the king.

Sir Bedivere lifted the king into the boat and the ladies made him as comfortable as they could. The boat moved away from the edge of the lake.

# LE MORTE D'ARTHUR

Sir Bedivere was heartbroken when he saw the king taken away from him. He was the last knight of the Round Table and he was alone in the world.

'What about me?' he cried in desperation. 'What shall I do, my lord?'

'You must do as best you can,' he heard the king's voice tell him. 'I am going into the vale of Avalon to be cured of this terrible wound. But if you hear no more about me, then pray for me, Sir Bedivere.'

Sir Bedivere walked away from the lake into the forest. He walked all night and in the morning he came to a hermitage.<sup>1</sup> He went into the chapel and there he saw the hermit praying in front of a new tomb.

Sir Bedivere was full of dread<sup>2</sup> when he saw the tomb.

'Whose tomb is that?' he asked the hermit.

The hermit rose to his feet.

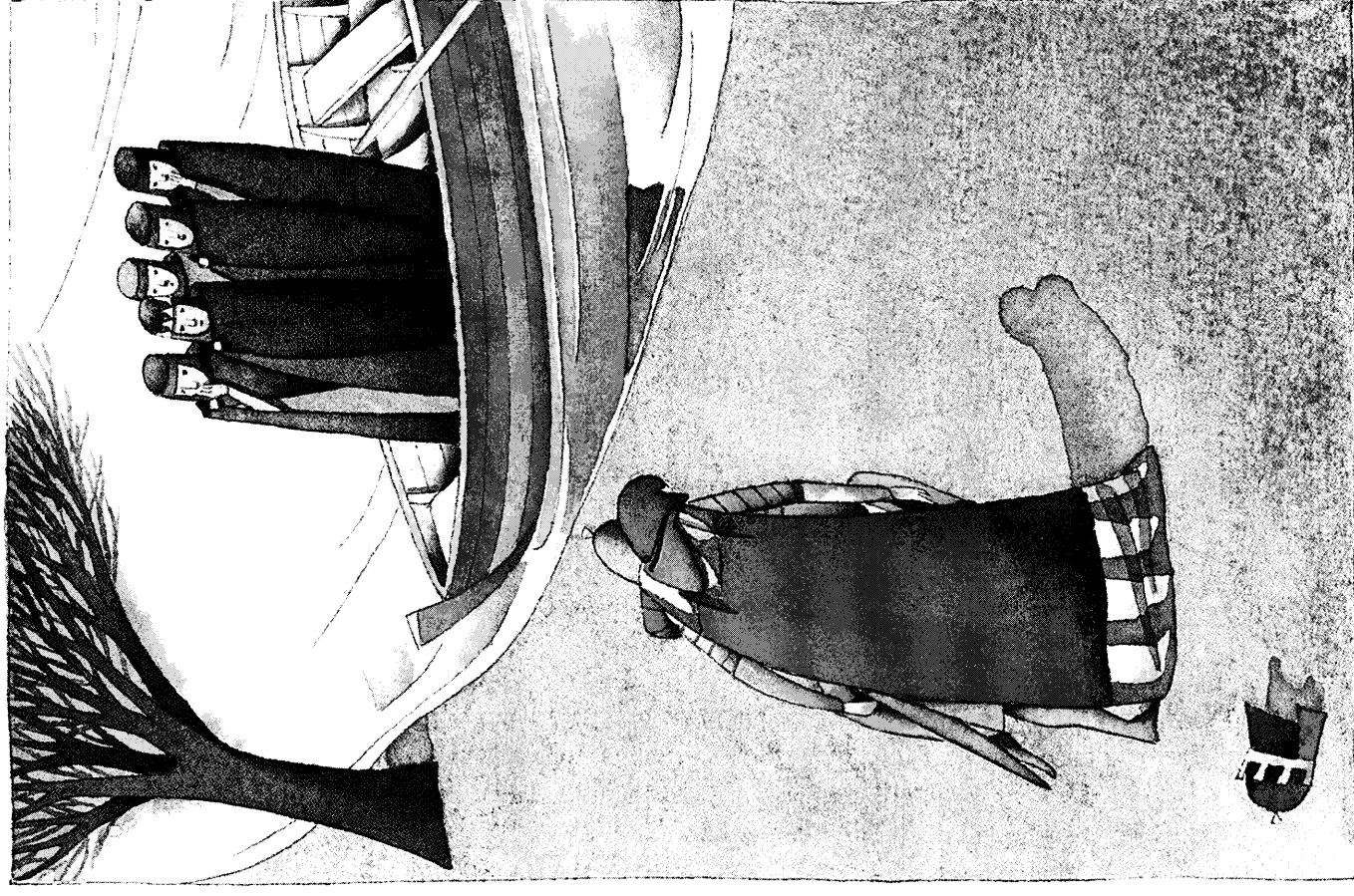
'I don't know who is buried here,' he answered, 'but I can guess. At midnight last night some ladies came here with the body of a man. They offered me money to bury him and a large sum of money to say prayers for his soul.'

'It's the king!' cried Sir Bedivere in despair.

Some people, however, do not believe that King Arthur died of his wounds. They think he was taken to the vale of Avalon and was successfully cured of his injuries there. Other people say that he died, but that the words written on his tomb promised that he would return: *Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus*.

1. **hermitage** : a religious house, which can sometimes be a monastery.

2. **dread** : fear.



- b. you/pull/the sword out of the stone/you/be/King of England  
.....
- c. Sir Gawain/not make peace/Sir Lancelot/remain  
.....
- d. Arthur/defeat/Sir Mordred/Sir Mordred/remain King of England  
.....
- e. I/be able to finish cleaning the house/you give me a hand  
.....
- f. you/want to hear something else/I/play a song by Sting  
.....

**4** *Le Morte d'Arthur* has been interpreted as a kind of tribute to a dying world, that of medieval chivalry. The final battle scene with only Sir Mordred and King Arthur left to fight has a sombre and tragic air about it. However, the story also seems to have a great meaning for us today. What do you think the story tells us about revenge, peace and honour? In about 180 words describe how Sir Gawain's desire for revenge brought about the destruction of Camelot. Include your thoughts on:

- whether Sir Gawain was right in wanting revenge
- whether King Arthur should have gone against Sir Gawain
- whether Sir Gawain's objection was the real reason that King Arthur did not make peace with Sir Lancelot
- revenge and war in the modern war
- whether the story of the destruction of Camelot offers us a lesson for today

**FOE 1** Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D for the following questions.

- 1 Who was Uther Pendragon?  
 A ☐ King Arthur's best knight.  
 B ☐ The Duke of Cornwall.  
 C ☐ The King of England.  
 D ☐ The King of France.
- 2 Who were Arthur's parents?  
 A ☐ The Duke of Cornwall and Igraine.  
 B ☐ Morgan le Fay and Merlin.  
 C ☐ Uther Pendragon and Igraine.  
 D ☐ Merlin and Igraine.
- 3 What would Uther Pendragon have to give Merlin in exchange for a chance to spend the night with Igraine?  
 A ☐ The child that was to be born from that union.  
 B ☐ Gold.  
 C ☐ Land.  
 D ☐ A castle.
- 4 When did the sword in the stone first appear?  
 A ☐ Just before Uther Pendragon's death.  
 B ☐ At Christmas.  
 C ☐ The day after Arthur was born.  
 D ☐ The day that Arthur became King of England.
- 5 Why did Arthur pull the sword out of the stone?  
 A ☐ Because he wanted to be the next King of England.  
 B ☐ Because he had to fight in a tournament and he needed a sword.  
 C ☐ Because Sir Ector needed a sword.  
 D ☐ Because Sir Kay needed a sword.

6 Who told Arthur who his parents really were?

- A ☐ A little boy.  
 B ☐ An old man.  
 C ☐ Morgan le Fay.  
 D ☐ Merlin.

7 What did Merlin say would happen if Arthur married Guinevere?

- A ☐ Their son would kill all the knights of the Round Table.  
 B ☐ Their son would never become King of England.  
 C ☐ Guinevere would betray him.  
 D ☐ Guinevere would never bear him a son.

8 Where did Arthur first see Excalibur?

- A ☐ It was the sword in the stone.  
 B ☐ Guinevere's father gave it to him.  
 C ☐ A hand holding it came out of a lake.  
 D ☐ Guinevere herself gave it to him.

9 Who was the best knight in Camelot?

- A ☐ Sir Lancelot.  
 B ☐ Sir Gawain.  
 C ☐ Sir Mordred.  
 D ☐ Sir Lionel.

10 According to Sir Gawain, what would happen if the knights told Arthur about Sir Lancelot and Guinevere?

- A ☐ Arthur would kill them all.  
 B ☐ They would destroy the Round Table.  
 C ☐ They would save the king's honour.  
 D ☐ They would have to kill Sir Lancelot.

11 What was Sir Gawain's reaction when he heard that Sir Lancelot had killed thirteen knights of the Round Table, one of whom was his brother?

- A ☐ He hoped that Sir Lancelot would escape.  
 B ☐ He wanted to kill Sir Lancelot himself.  
 C ☐ He was heartbroken because he knew that was the end of the Round Table.  
 D ☐ He wanted Guinevere to be burned at the stake.

12 What was it about Sir Lancelot's rescue of Guinevere that appalled Arthur?

- A ☐ The fact that Guinevere would not be executed.  
 B ☐ The fact that it was Sir Lancelot who had saved her.  
 C ☐ The fact that Sir Lancelot had killed two unarmed knights.  
 D ☐ The fact that Sir Lancelot had escaped without even being wounded.

13 Why did Sir Lancelot's knights become angry with him during their war with King Arthur?

- A ☐ Because he did not use all his strength and many of his knights were dying for him.  
 B ☐ Because he showed himself to be a coward and a traitor.  
 C ☐ Because he did not let his knights fight with all their strength against Sir Gawain.  
 D ☐ Because he would not return Guinevere to Arthur and end the war.

14 Why did Sir Lancelot finally decide to fight Sir Gawain?

- A ☐ Because Sir Gawain had called him a coward and a traitor and he had to defend his honour.  
 B ☐ Because he finally understood that Sir Gawain was unbeatable only between dawn and midday.  
 C ☐ Because he could see that Guinevere was falling in love with Sir Gawain.  
 D ☐ Because he thought that the death of Sir Gawain would finally bring peace to England.

15 Why did Sir Bedivere almost betray King Arthur?

- A ☐ Because he was in love with Guinevere.  
B ☐ Because he was loyal to Sir Lancelot.  
C ☐ Because he wanted to become King of England.  
D ☐ Because he didn't want to lose Excalibur.



Answer the following questions.

- a. A kind of original sin marked King Arthur's birth. What was it?  
b. Did the fact that Arthur pulled the sword out of the stone prove that he was the legitimate King of England for everybody? If not, what did?  
c. A kind of original sin stood behind the destruction of the knights of the Round Table. What was it?  
d. What was the origin of the Round Table?  
e. How did the Round Table become Arthur's?  
f. The story of Sir Turquine and Sir Lancelot was similar to the story of Sir Gawain and Sir Lancelot. Why?  
g. With regard to the knights of the Round Table, these two stories were almost opposites. Why?  
h. Was Sir Lancelot innocent or guilty? Does *Le Morte d'Arthur* give us a good answer? Why or why not?